

China Insights

Xianqun Bu *Editor*

The History of Chinese Civilization

 中国社会科学出版社
CHINA SOCIAL SCIENCES PRESS

 Springer

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The History of Chinese Civilization



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ISSN 2363-7579

China Insights

ISBN 978-981-99-7124-4

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7125-1>

ISSN 2363-7587 (electronic)

ISBN 978-981-99-7125-1 (eBook)

Jointly published with China Social Sciences Press

The print edition is not for sale in China (Mainland). Customers from China (Mainland) please order the print book from: China Social Sciences Press.

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Series Foreword

Since the Opium War, modern China has come under attack and been bullied for its backwardness; this cultural circumstance has given many Chinese people a psychological inferiority complex, as China has lagged behind other countries technologically, institutionally and culturally. Efforts to change the situation in which Western countries were strong but China was weak and to revitalize China needed to start with cultural criticism and culture renovation. Therefore, the Chinese people turned their eyes to the outside world and learned from Japan, Europe, the USA and even Soviet Russia. We have always been overwhelmed by stress and anxiety and have had a burning desire to reverse the state of being bullied as a result of underdevelopment, poverty and weakness and to catch up with and surpass the Western powers. In pursuing the more than one-hundred-year-old dream of building a powerful country and reviving China, we have focused on understanding and learning from others, but seldom, if ever, have others learned from and understood us. This has not greatly changed in the course of modernization since China's reform and opening up in 1978. The translation and introduction of many Western works in the 1980s and 1990s are very good examples. This is the history of the Chinese people's understanding of the relationship between China and the rest of the world since the beginning of modern times.

At the same time, in pursuing the dream of turning China into a powerful country and rejuvenating it through material (technological) criticism, institutional criticism and cultural criticism, the Chinese people have struggled to find a path that would make the country prosperous and the people strong while preventing the country from being ruined and the race from being destroyed. This path first represents a thought, a banner and a soul. The key issue has been what kind of thought, banner and soul can save the country, making it prosperous and the people strong. For more than one hundred years, the Chinese people have constantly carried out experiments and attempts amidst humiliation, failure and anxiety. They have experienced failure in adopting advanced Western technology and thought on the basis of safeguarding China's feudal system and practicing a constitutional monarchy after the collapse of the Western capitalist political path and a great setback in worldwide socialism in the early 1990s. The Chinese people ultimately embarked on a path towards a successful

revolution with national independence and liberation; in particular, they have adopted a path leading to the socialist modernization of China—a road towards socialism with Chinese characteristics—by combining the theoretical logic of scientific socialism with the historical logic of China’s social development. After more than 30 years of reform and opening up, China’s socialist market economy has rapidly developed; tremendous achievements have been made in economic, political, cultural and social constructions; comprehensive national strength, cultural soft power and international influence have substantially improved; and a great success has been achieved in socialism with Chinese characteristics. Although the latter project has not yet become full-fledged, its systems and institutions have basically taken shape. After more than one hundred years of pursuing dreams, China is rising among the nations of the world with a greater degree of confidence in the path it has chosen, the theory it has adopted and the institutions it has created.

Meanwhile, we should be aware that given the long-standing cognition and cultural psychology of learning from Western countries, we seldom take the initiative in showcasing ourselves—historical China and current China in reality—to the world, though China has emerged as a great world power. Due to a deeply rooted view that “Western countries are strong and China is weak”, developed through Western-Chinese cultural exchanges, Western people and nations seldom have a sense of Chinese history or the current developments in China, let alone an understanding of China’s developmental path and such in-depth issues as the scientificity and effectiveness of China’s theory and institutions or their unique value for and contributions to human civilization. As self-recognition is not displayed, the “China Collapse Theory”, “China Threat Theory”, “China State Capitalism” and other so-called theories coined by certain people with ulterior motives and differing political views have been widely spread.

During our development, based on “crossing the river by feeling the stones”, we have paid attention to learning from Western countries, understanding the world and learning to know ourselves through Western experience and discourse but have neglected self-recognition and efforts to let others know us. When we strive to become part of the world in a more tolerant and friendly way, we are not objectively, truly understood. Therefore, we should describe the path to the success of socialism with Chinese characteristics, tell Chinese stories, disseminate Chinese experiences, use international expressions to show a real China to the world and help people around the world realize that the Western manner of modernization is not the endpoint of human historical evolution and that socialism with Chinese characteristics is also a valuable treasure of human thought. This is undoubtedly a very important task for an academic cultural researcher with a sense of justice and responsibility.

In this connection, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences organized its top-notch experts and scholars and several external experts to write the *China Insights* series. This series not only provides an overview of China’s path, theories and institutions but also objectively describes China’s current development in the areas of political institutions, human rights, the rule of law, the economic system, finance, social governance, social security, population policies, values, religious faith, ethnic policies, rural issues, urbanization, industrialization, ecology, ancient civilization,

literature, art, etc., thus depicting China in a way that helps readers visualize these topics.

We hope that this series will help domestic readers more correctly understand the course of the more than 100 years of China's modernization and more rationally look at current difficulties, enhance the urgency for and national confidence in comprehensively intensifying reform, build a consensus on reform and development and gather strength in this regard, as well as deepen foreign readers' understanding of China, thus fostering a better international environment for China's development.

Beijing, China
January 2014

Zhao Jianying

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Chapter 1

Introduction: The Unique Path and Rich Connotation of Chinese Civilization



Xianqun Bu

Ancient Egypt, Babylon, India, China and Greece were the five recognized origins of civilizations. They each gave birth to the oldest civilizations in the world and had a profound impact on the surrounding areas and the world history. Today, the material, institutional, and spiritual cultures of various countries, ethnic groups, and regions globally vary considerably, but tracing them back to history, we find them inextricably linked with these ancient civilizations. The precious heritage contained in these ancient civilizations is the driving force that constantly inspires human civilization to move forward. However, among civilizations born in these regions, the Chinese civilization is the only one that has been uninterrupted and continued to this day. The Chinese civilization, with a length of 5000 years and a breadth of profound thoughts, has not only influenced the historical growth of the Chinese nation in particular but also made outstanding contributions to human civilization at large.

1.1 “Civilization” and “Chinese Civilization”

The Concept of “Civilization”

Civilization means that human beings broke away from barbarism and entered a historical period with classes and states. The time or sign of entering a civilized society in various countries and nations worldwide are different, and it is difficult to measure it with a unified standard. However, there is still a relatively consistent understanding of the three levels of the contents of civilization: material, system and spirit. “Civilization” and “culture” are conceptually related, yet different. Generally speaking, both “civilization” and “culture” refer to the material, institutional and

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X. Bu (ed.), *The History of Chinese Civilization*, China Insights,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7125-1_1

spiritual wealth created by human beings, but “culture” has a broader connotation. “Civilization,” on the other hand, is the product of a culture developed to a certain stage. It is more of the expression of a degree of progress in human society. A particular civilization determines a particular culture, and a particular civilization must have the deposits of that particular culture. Different cultures and civilizations are often symbolic concepts that distinguish different national characteristics of different countries.

The Chinese have long had their own understanding of *wenming* (“civilization”). The word *wenming* appears many times in the *Book of Changes*, which originated in the pre-Qin period in China. In its “Qian” chapter, there is the line “‘The dragon appears in the fields’: all under heaven begins to be born and brightened.” Everything in the world “to be born and brightened” is the original meaning of *wenming* (“civilization”) in Chinese. In the “Tuan Zhuan” of the “Tong Ren” chapter, *Book of Changes* reads, “Then we have the trigram indicating elegance and intelligence, supported by that indicating strength; with the line in the central, and its correct, position, and responding to the corresponding line above.” It used the term *wenming* to symbolize the “elegant and intelligent” character of a man of integrity. In the “Tuan Zhuan” of the “Bi” chapter, the classic explains, “This is illustrated in the appearances that ornament the sky. Elegance and intelligence, denoted by the lower trigram, regulated by the arrest, denoted by the upper, suggest the observances that adorn human society.” Here, the word *wenming* means that people should follow the ethical and moral system and conform to the laws of nature to know what to do and what not to do. The “Tuan Zhuan” of the “Da You” chapter of the book says, “The attributes of its component trigrams are strength and vigor with elegance and brightness. The ruling line in it responds to the ruling line in the symbol of heaven, and consequently its action is all at the proper times. In this way, it is said to indicate great progress and success.” The use of *wenming* here refers to clear observation, which means that people should be clear about the way of heaven and will prosper if they act at the right time. The line “The inner trigram denotes being accomplished and bright; the outer, being pliant and submissive” is found in the “Tuan Zhuan” of the book’s “Ming Yi” chapter. It indicates that King Wen of Zhou appears submissive but was morally bright at heart. The “Cannon of Shun” in the *Book of Documents* records, “He was profound, wise, accomplished, and intelligent. He was mild and courteous, and truly sincere. The report of his mysterious virtue was heard on high, and he was appointed to office.” It tells of the legendary Emperor Shun. Learning about his wisdom, virtue, gentleness, respectfulness, and honesty even at a tender age, Emperor Yao later granted him an official position. Kong Yingda, a master of classics in the Tang Dynasty, said in the commentary to the “Cannon of Shun” that only when one knows astronomy and geography (*jingtian-weidi*) can one be called cultured (*wen*), and only when one shines everywhere (*linzhao-sifang*) with one’s knowledge, one can be called enlightening (*ming*).” Therefore, *jingtian-weidi* refers to the practical activities of transforming nature, and *linzhao-sifang* refers to the spiritual activities of driving away ignorance. Here, *wenming* (“civilization”) is understood as the sum of human’s material and spiritual achievements. In short, the Chinese ancients’ understanding of “civilization” includes spiritual, mental, and practical activities such as

brightness, wisdom, morality, and norms. It not only has Chinese characteristics, but also embraces today's people's understanding of the meaning of "civilization," which is a view of civilization that reflects historical progress. It is worth noting that while the word "civilization" came into being, the word "culture" also appeared, of which the ancient Chinese also had their own unique understanding. The mention of *wenhua* ("culture") in the "Tuan Zhuan" section of the "Bi" chapter of the *Book of Changes* is regarded as the first appearance of the word in Chinese documented history. It says, "We look at the *wen* (ornamental observances of society), and understand how the *hua* (processes of transformation) are accomplished all under heaven." It means to examine the ethical principles of human beings and use them to complete the task of educating the public. *Wenhua* ("culture") means to make people cultured. It reflects the Chinese ancients regarded "culture" as civilization progress, which is an idea similar to today's understanding of the word "culture".

The Origin of Chinese Civilization

Chinese civilization refers to the civilization born on the land of China in eastern Asia, the eastern part of the world. Archaeological discoveries have proved that China is one of the important regions for the origin of ancient human beings. It is generally believed that the Sivapithecus living in the Siwalik Hills of northern India occupies an important position in the history of human evolution. The genus represents "man in the making." The Lufeng apes (*Lufengpithecus lufengensis*) discovered in Yunnan Province, China, dated back to eight million years ago. The species could walk upright and lived beyond arboreal habitats. Therefore, it had the basic characteristic required for being in the process of transforming from ape to man. The *Australopithecus* fossils discovered in Hubei, Guangxi, and other places in China, and the Yuanmou Man (*Homo erectus yuanmouensis*) discovered in Yunnan, China, are between four to five million and two million years old, respectively. They have finally completed the transformation from ape to man. Living on the ground with obvious division of hands and feet, they walked upright and were able to make simple tools, thus were the first to conduct human activities in China.

Human history came along with humans. People refer to the history before the emergence of civilization as the history of primitive society. The history of Chinese primitive society had gone through over two million years. Archaeologists have divided the primitive society into two major stages, the Paleolithic and the Neolithic, based on the differences in the way stone tools were made by humans. Paleolithic tools refer to stone tools made by striking, and Neolithic tools are those made by grinding. China has a rich and colorful primitive culture. The Yuanmou Man and the Peking Man in the early Paleolithic period already knew how to use and manage fire and lived a life of gathering, fishing and hunting. The Upper Cave Man in Zhoukoudian, Beijing, dating back to the late Paleolithic period, had mastered artificial fire and the polishing and drilling techniques to make labor tools and decorations. They experimented with grain cultivation and livestock domestication. Humans also witnessed the change of social structure in the late Paleolithic period, starting to live in clan societies instead of their primitive groups. The original clan society was

matrilineal, and China also experienced the stage. Records in ancient Chinese literature refer to this period by stating that “people knew their mothers but not their fathers.” The matrilineal clan society is based on the identity of matrilineal kinship, and women occupy the dominant position in production and social structures. People worked and lived together, and there was little difference between the rich and the poor within the clan. The Jiangzhai site in the Yangshao Culture period in China mirrors the situation of the matrilineal clan society. About 10,000 years ago, China entered the Neolithic Age, where people used ground stone tools, made pottery, raised livestock, built villages, and began farming. Their lives run smoothly over time. More than 10,000 Neolithic sites have been discovered in China and are widely distributed. The middle and late Neolithic Age saw the gradual evolvement from the matrilineal clan society to the patrilineal clan society. The patrilineal clan society is based on patrilineal blood identity, in which men occupy a dominant position in production and society. Patriarchy thus emerged.

The development of production accompanies the progress of human society. In the middle and late Neolithic Age, 5000 or 6000 years ago, the advancement of production tools and the emergence of agriculture and animal husbandry promoted the development of social productivity. The polarization between the rich and the poor and social inequality followed, and private ownership within the clan appeared. The Dawenkou Culture appeared in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, and the Hemudu Culture in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. The tombs of the Dawenkou Culture are visibly different in size, and there are also great contrasts in the objects buried with the dead. They indicate differentiation of social status and the difference between the rich and the poor within the settlement. More than 10 kinds of over 20 image symbols have been discovered on the pottery of Dawenkou. They are the early forms of Chinese characters. Residents of the Hemudu Culture grew rice, mastered the technique of raising silkworms and reeling silk, and lived in mortise-and-tenon structured abodes of the stilt-house style (Fig. 1.1).

Fig. 1.1 Head statue of the Goddess of Hongshan



After a long time of evolvement and accumulation, numerous cultural sites had been distributed on the vast land of China by the Longshan Culture era dating back to 4000 or 5000 years ago. Like a flower with double layers of petals, the distribution was centered on the Central Plains of China, with the rest of the cultures dotted around it, presenting a magnificent spectacle in Chinese history. It is the archaeological manifestation of Chinese civilization's "unity in diversity" pattern.

Famous cultural sites in the Longshan Culture era include the Taosi Culture in Xiangfen, Shanxi; the Liangzhu Culture in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River; and the Hongshan Culture in the West Liao River Basin. Exquisite jade articles, large-scale altars, temples, ritual vessels, city sites, and even early scripts have been excavated. All these indicate that China was about to reach the threshold of a civilized society.

Many ethnic groups in the world have legends about the origin of their civilizations. In its rich ancient history, China also cherishes the historical legends ranging from the "Pangu's Creation of the World" to "Nüwa's Creation of Humans" and the "Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors." According to these legends, China's history began with the "Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors." The "Three Sovereigns" dated back to an earlier era, with different names and deeper mythological colors. However, they reflected China's progress in different historical stages. Take Youchao, one of the "Three Sovereigns," for example. He was said to live in an abode he had built of wood, reflecting the revolutionary change of humans from cave-dwelling to house-dwelling. Suiren, another legendary sovereign, was believed to make fire by drilling wood, indicating that the Chinese ancestors of the late Paleolithic period had mastered the technology of artificial fire. According to legend, Fuxi taught the Chinese to fish and hunt. He also created *Bagua*, a set of eight symbols used in Taoist cosmology to represent the fundamental principles of reality. The legend is also related to the development of the fishing and hunting economy and the emergence of primitive thinking in the late Paleolithic period. Legend has it that Shennong invented agriculture and used *leisi*, a plow-like farm implement, to farm, reflecting agriculture's origin in the Neolithic Age. There are also different versions of the primordial "Five Emperors." According to legend, the Yellow Emperor, the head of the Five Emperors, was a tribal leader in the middle and upper reaches of the Yellow River. By joining another tribal leader, Emperor Yan, to establish the Yan-Huang tribe, he was regarded as the ancestor of Huaxia (an earlier name for China) by later generations. Zhuanxu followed Yan-Huang. Legend has it that primitive religion emerged during Zhuanxu's era when he separated the mundane world from the celestial one. It was a change known in Chinese history as *juedi-tiantong*. The earliest specialized clergymen appeared, dedicated to communication between heaven and earth, which was also a sign of the division of mental labor from physical labor. Emperor Ku succeeded Zhuanxu. According to legend, he was well-versed in state governance and loved by his people.

He was the inventor of the solar term with 24 periods in the traditional Chinese lunisolar calendars. The last two of the five emperors, Yao and Shun, were probably the leaders of the tribal alliances in the Central Plains. When Yao was old, he

decided that Shun should inherit his position according to the tribes' recommendation and his observation of Shun's ability and character. This way of succession to the throne is called abdication, where the supreme ruler peacefully transfers the state power to another person while still alive based on the successor's moral strength and competence rather than his blood ties. It was exactly the way the supreme power was transferred among the above five emperors according to legend. The great ancient Chinese historian Sima Qian wrote "Annals of the Five Emperors" in his *Records of the Grand Historian*. According to the political ideal of "grand unification" promulgated in the Han Dynasty, Sima Qian arranged the legendary "Five Emperors" as if they were related by blood and lived in the same political entity one after another. The fact is that the "Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors" might not necessarily correlate to specific individuals. Nor might they all be the leaders of the same tribe or political entity. Instead, their legends reflect the process of various China's early civilizations coming together in different eras and finally being united as one.

There is still no consensus on the criteria for human beings to enter a civilized society. Scripts, cities, metallurgy, ritual systems, agriculture, religions, palaces, and jade ware have all been used as signs of entry into a civilized society. In the late period of China's Longshan Culture, roughly parallel to the Yao, Shun, and Yu periods in ancient Chinese legends, the elements of a civilized society appeared. Historical records document that numerous "states" and "nations" existed during this period. These "states" and "nations" had the primary form of civilization. When we claim that China has a history of over 5000 years, we count it from the "state-nation" period of the Longshan Culture. "States" and "nations" are also known as the early countries.

Engels once said that the state is the cohesive force of civilized society. It means that the emergence of states symbolizes the formation of civilized societies. According to legend, Shun, at his old age, abdicated the throne to Yu, who had succeeded in controlling the biblical flood. Yu established the Xia, the first of the Chinese dynasties. After his death, his son Qi succeeded him, replacing the abdication system with the hereditary succession. According to the *Records of the Grand Historian: Annals of Xia*, the Xia Dynasty already had relatively complete state institutions and officials. The main body of the Erlitou site discovered by archaeologists in Yanshi, Henan, is probably the remains of the Xia culture. Therefore, the establishment of the Xia Dynasty marked China's formal entry into a civilized society.

1.2 The Evolution of Chinese Civilization

Chinese civilization has continued uninterrupted ever since the country entered a civilized society over 5000 years ago. "Continuation without interruption" means that although Chinese civilization has changed over time and space, its fundamental connotations have remained the same and have never been completely broken due to social changes, ethnic conflicts, and dynastic changes. The historical confidence

and cultural heritage therein have continuously promoted the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese civilization until today. Today's China is still in a new stage of development of its civilization, and today's Chinese civilization is still like the one in history, continuing to contribute wisdom and strength to human civilization and creating a new form of human civilization. The Chinese civilization features the continuance and length rarely seen in the history of world civilization. Its development can be divided into the following stages:

The Xia-Shang-Western Zhou Civilization

The Xia, Shang, and Western Zhou dynasties were the first development stage after Chinese civilization took the form of a state. This stage, spanning 1300 years, started from the establishment of the Xia Dynasty in 2070 BC and ended in 771 BC, when King Ping of Zhou moved eastward, marking the demise of the Western Zhou Dynasty. During this period, the Chinese civilization developed successively in material, institutional, and spiritual forms until it reached its apex. Among the dynasties, the Western Zhou was the first peak period of China's development after it entered a civilized society. Since this period, China has embarked on the road of civilization with its unique characteristics, national style, values, and development path. The historical records of the later generations referred to the Xia, Shang, and Western Zhou dynasties as "The Three Dynasties."

"The Three Dynasties" is a significant stage in the development of Chinese material civilization, symbolized by the manufacture and use of bronze ware. The bronze ware unearthed from the Erlitou Xia Dynasty site is full in range and complex in craftsmanship, covering ritual vessels, weapons, and production tools. The manufacture of bronze ware in the Shang Dynasty was more sophisticated with matured craftsmanship, more varieties, complex decorative designs, and wide application. The Houmuwu (formerly called Simuwu) *ding* (quadripod) represents the highest level of bronze casting in the Shang Dynasty. Bronze casting in the Western Zhou Dynasty advanced in technology and diversified in shapes compared with that of the previous dynasty, and the production efficiency improved significantly. In particular, the lengthy inscriptions cast on bronze ware are valuable first-hand materials for scholars to study the history of the Western Zhou Dynasty. In the twentieth century, a jade-handled sword was unearthed in the tomb of the Guo State from the late Western Zhou Dynasty to the early Spring and Autumn period, found in Shangcunling, Sanmenxia, Henan. It contains some artificial iron smelting components, which advanced the age of Chinese artificial iron smelting technology by more than a century (Fig. 1.2).

"The Three Dynasties" was also an essential stage in the development of the Chinese institutional civilization. The dynasties' establishment epitomized the construction of institutional civilization. The founding of the Xia Dynasty ended the multi-state situation and meant a unified pluralistic dynasty centered on the Central Plains was established. The state structure of the Shang Dynasty was more advanced than that of the Xia Dynasty. The Shang Dynasty implemented the *neifu* (inner region) and *waifu* (outer region) systems. The area close to the capital directly managed by

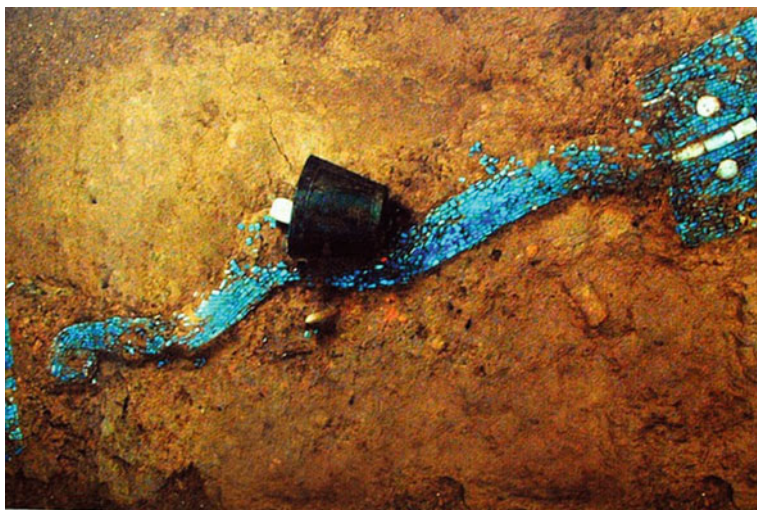


Fig. 1.2 Turquoise dragon-form artifact in Erlitou

the king of Shang was *neifu* (the inner region), and the vassal states and tribes indirectly controlled by the king of Shang were *waifu* (the outer regions). Based on the *neifu-waifu* system, the Shang Dynasty's political and cultural influences reached the sea in the east, southern Gansu in the west, the Jiangnan Plain in the south, and the Yan Mountains in the north. With the implementation of the feudal and patriarchal clan systems, the Western Zhou Dynasty's state structure was even improved. The Western Zhou Dynasty was the heyday of the ancient Chinese ritual and music civilization, of which the major aim is to maintain the feudal and patriarchal clan systems with the Zhou king, or *Tianzi* (Son of Heaven), as the core. The institutional civilization of "The Three Dynasties" differed from that of the dynasties after the Qin and Han. But, it played an essential role in laying the foundation for forming the institutional civilization themed grand unification since the Qin Dynasty.

"The Three Dynasties" was a critical stage in forming the Chinese spiritual civilization. Writing is the sign of civilization and an essential condition for the inheritance of civilization. We have not yet found direct evidence of the existence of characters in the Xia Dynasty. But we have uncovered a lot of carved symbols in the Xia cultural sites, which some scholars believe may be prototypes related to the oracle bone script. Chinese scholars generally believe that the oracle bone script was a mature set of characters, which should have a development process, and this process was in the Xia Dynasty. The spiritual civilization of the Shang Dynasty is embodied in the mature and developed writing system represented by the oracle bone script. Also called the oracle bone inscriptions, the oracle bone script was one of the oldest writing systems worldwide. The text inscribed with it covers the contents of sacrifices, astronomical phenomena, field hunting, agriculture, and warfare, reflecting the spiritual and mental activities of the Shang people in terms of religion, calendar, and

others. The spiritual civilization of the Western Zhou Dynasty is prominently manifested in the awakening of the people-oriented thought. The Western Zhou Dynasty rulers learned the historical lessons from the demise of the Xia and Shang dynasties and realized that they must pay attention to their people's needs. They proposed the famous thesis that "rulers must treat people's opinions as mirrors to examine themselves." The thought of "promoting virtue and being prudent in the infliction of punishment" and "worshipping virtue, protecting the people" emerged. Since then, the people-oriented thought has occupied a place in the traditional Chinese political civilization and has great significance to progress. Classics taking shape in the Western Zhou Dynasty, such as *The Book of Documents: The Great Plan* and the *Book of Changes*, embodied the simple view of nature and dialectical thought in ancient China.

The Spring and Autumn-Warring States Civilization.

After King Ping of Zhou moved east to Luoyi (present-day Luoyang, Henan Province), Chinese history entered the Eastern Zhou era, which was divided into the Spring and Autumn (770 BC–476 BC) and the Warring States (475 BC–221 BC) periods. It was a time of profound political, economic and social transformation in ancient China and a period of great ideological and cultural prosperity and development.

Regarding material civilization, significant progress was made in iron smelting technology. The use of iron tools became more common, the combination of iron plows and cattle farming dramatically improved agricultural productivity, and more land was opened up. Various states built large-scale water conservancy projects to develop agricultural production, such as the Dujiangyan Irrigation System and the Zhengguo Canal of the Qin State and the Anfengtang (Shaobei) Reservoir of the Chu State. The development of agriculture promoted the division of labor. For example, the handicraft industry branched into such industries as textile, pottery, salt-boiling, and lacquerware, in which new progress was achieved. Iron smelting also became a new sector of handicraft. All states had their particular metal currencies in different shapes to meet the needs of commercial and economic development. Commercial cities began to rise, and Linzi (in today's Zibo City, Shandong Province) of Qi State had such a large population that "the long sleeves would form a huge curtain when everyone raised their hands, and their dripping sweat would form a rain." Handan of Zhao State, the capital city Ying (north of today's Jingzhou, Hubei Province) of Chu State, and the Lower Capital (southeast of today's Yi County, Hebei Province) of Yan State were all famous metropolises at that time.

The Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods were also critical for ancient China's institutional transformation. After the Zhou house moved eastward, the king of Zhou's authority declined further. Consequently, various states began to fight for hegemony under the banner of "respecting the king and repelling the barbarians." A situation arose where the so-called "Five Hegemonies" of the Spring and Autumn period vied for supremacy. Wars promoted the annexation of states. Gradually, only seven were left, namely Qin, Chu, Yan, Qi, Han, Zhao, and Wei,

known in history as the “Seven Warring States.” These states successfully implemented political, economic, military, and institutional reforms, so as to launch the war for hegemony, enrich the country, and strengthen the army. As a result, a legal system replaced the ritual system, a prefecture-county system replaced the enfeoffment system, a military merit system replaced the five-title system, a bureaucratic system replaced the hereditary system, and a private-owned land system replaced the state-owned land system. In a word, the Chinese institutional civilization underwent significant changes.

In terms of spiritual civilization, the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods saw great intellectual liberation in Chinese history. In the face of drastic social changes, scholars representing the interests of their respective classes expressed their views and opinions one after another. Emerging rulers actively recruited ideological spokespersons to seek good policies for governing their states, leading to a situation known as the “Contention of A Hundred Schools of Thought.” Various schools, such as Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism, Mohism, Yin Yang, Political Strategists, Militarism, and Agrarianism, contended to show their capability. In the competition, great thinkers, military strategists, and diplomats like Laozi, Confucius, Sunzi, Mozi, Mencius, Zhuangzi, Xunzi, Han Feizi, Su Qin, and Zhang Yi emerged. Their thoughts significantly promoted the development of philosophy, history, literature, and art, profoundly impacting traditional Chinese culture. This period also witnessed the flourishing of Chinese literature and history. The works of the thinkers mentioned above were excellent prose with profound implications and fluent writing styles. China’s earliest poetry collection, *The Book of Songs*, and the great patriotic poet Qu Yuan’s unique Chu Ci were created during this era. *Spring and Autumn*, *Zuo Zhuan* (*The Commentary of Zuo*), *Guoyu* (*Discourse of States*), *Zhan Guo Ce* (*Strategies of the Warring States*) were all renowned historical classics of the time. Silk painting represented the maturity of the period’s painting art, reflecting the people’s spiritual mood at that time. The musical instruments represented by the *bianzhong* chimes have an important position in the history of world music.

The Qin-Han Civilization

In 221 BC, Qin Shi Huang finally eliminated the six eastern rival states and ended the Warring States period when China was divided. He established the Qin Dynasty, the first unified multi-ethnic centralized state in Chinese history, with the capital located in Xianyang (in today’s Shaanxi Province). The Qin Dynasty was overthrown in 206 BC by the rebels led by Liu Bang and Xiang Yu due to its tyrannical rule. Afterward, Liu Bang and Xiang Yu were engaged in the four-year Chu-Han Contention. In 202 BC, Liu Bang defeated Xiang Yu and established the Han Dynasty, setting the capital in Chang’an (now northwest of Xi’an, Shaanxi). Known as Western Han, the dynasty had 12 emperors and lasted 210 years. The Western Han Dynasty was replaced by the Xin Dynasty, established by a consort relative named Wang Mang in 8 CE. A peasant uprising staged by what was known as the Lulin (Green Forest) army overthrew it in 23 CE. After a short reign of the Gengshi Emperor (23–25 CE) put on the throne by the Lulin, Liu Xiu, a descendant of the Western Han house, suppressed the rebel forces in various places and rebuilt the Han Dynasty in 25 CE, putting the capital

in Luoyang in present-day Henan Province in eastern China. Hence the dynasty is referred to as the Eastern Han in history. The dynasty was ruled by 14 emperors and lasted 195 years. Then it was replaced by the Cao Wei regime in 220.

The Qin-Han civilization, which lasted for more than 440 years, occupies a vital position in the history of Chinese civilization. First, the Qin and Han dynasties created a long-standing institutional civilization. The emperor system, centralized power system, bureaucratic system, official documentation-management system, military system, legal system, and other political systems created by the Qin Dynasty have far-reaching influence. The Han Dynasty inherited the Qin systems and further improved and developed them, laying the foundation for the basic political system of the later dynasties. Many core systems of China as a unified multi-ethnic state were formed during the Qin and Han dynasties, starting China's tradition of grand unification and opposition to division and leading to a community of the Chinese nation with the Han ethnic group as the main body.

Second, the Qin and Han dynasties created a rich and colorful material civilization. Unification conforms to the laws of Chinese historical development. The establishment of a unified multi-ethnic state in the Qin and Han dynasties promoted social and economic development. Intensive farming was introduced when various iron and new-style farm tools were used extensively. Cattle farming became universal. The construction of large-scale water conservancy projects such as harnessing the Yellow River guaranteed agricultural production. There was a large-scale, satisfactory variety of handicraft sectors, including construction, metallurgy, pottery, textile, vessel and vehicle building, lacquer making, salt boiling, and wine brewing, with a distinct division of labor and exquisite craftsmanship. Cai Lun, a Chinese eunuch court official in the He Emperor's reign of the Eastern Han Dynasty, improved and perfected papermaking, creating conditions for the universal use of paper. Papermaking is China's major contribution to human civilization. During the Qin and Han dynasties, many famous cities—centers of politics, economy, and commerce—appeared all over China. They included Chang'an, Luoyang, Handan, Linzi, Wan (in today's Nanyang, Henan Province), and Chengdu. The exchange between different civilizations promotes the exchange of their achievements. After Zhang Qian opened the Silk Road, the Han Dynasty incorporated the Western Regions into its territory. It accelerated the interactions with the Western Regions, Central Asia, and countries and civilizations further west. The iron smelting and sericulture techniques of the Han Dynasty were spread to Central Asia through the Western Regions at this time. Walnuts, grapes, pomegranates, and alfalfa were also introduced into the Central Plains from the Western Regions.

Third, the Qin and Han dynasties created a spiritual civilization with profound connotations. Confucianism, which had originated in the pre-Qin period, became the dominant thought in the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty and was officially recognized as the mainstream ideology. After that, Confucianism was referred to as *Jingxue* (Chinese Classic Studies), a discipline of interpreting Confucian classics. The Western and Eastern Han dynasties saw the flourishing of Chinese Classic Studies. Since then, there has been an indissoluble bond between traditional Chinese politics and Confucianism. Learning about, studying, and writing about Confucian

classics became intellectuals' lifelong pursuit and the only way to social mobility. A group of scholars of far-reaching influence on the history of Chinese thought appeared during the two Han dynasties, such as Dong Zhongshu, Liu Xiang, Liu Xin, Ma Rong, Xu Shen, and Zheng Xuan. Outstanding achievements in the field of history were made during the Qin and Han dynasties. The great historian Sima Qian compiled *Records of the Grand Historian*, China's first chronicle-style general history. Ban Gu wrote *Han Shu* (*The History of Former Han*), the first biographical and dynastic historical record in Chinese history. *Dongguan Hanji* (*Records of the Han from the Dongguan Library*), compiled in the Eastern Han, set a precedent for the official revision of contemporary history. Epitomized by the *fu* of the Han Dynasty, the prose, and the Yuefu poetry, the Qin and Han dynasties' literary accomplishments were brilliant. The five-character verses that appeared in the Eastern Han Dynasty tugged at the heartstrings of their readers with plain language. They were realistic and aspiring. The *Peacock Flies Southeast* and the *Nineteen Old Poems* represented the Yuefu and the five-character poems, respectively (Fig. 1.3).

The Han-dynasty fine arts of painting, stone carving, and brick and stone reliefs were developed into maturity. Many of the exquisite artworks have survived. The Qin and Han dynasties were also vital to developing religions in China. At the turn

Fig. 1.3 Mawangdui silk banner, Han Dynasty



of the Western Han Dynasty and the Eastern Han Dynasty, Buddhism, which had originated in ancient India, found its way to China and began to spread in the country ever since. Taoism, a native Chinese religion, took shape during this period. The Qin and Han dynasties' scientific and technological achievements were outstanding. The *Jiuzhang Suanshu* (*Nine Chapters on the Mathematical Art*) marked the formation of ancient China's mathematical system. Zhang Heng's *Lingxian* (*Spiritual Constitution of the Universe*) advocated the theory of "spherical heaven," believing that the sky and the earth were spherical, with the earth being in the center surrounded by the sky. His hypothesis represented the astronomical achievements at the time. Zhang Heng also invented the seismograph, which could measure the epicenter of an earthquake. Written in the Qin and Han dynasties, *Huangdi Neijing* (*The Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor*), *Shennong Bencao Jing* (*Classic of the Materia Medica*), and *Shanhan Lun* (*Treatise on Cold Damage Diseases*) have laid the foundation for traditional Chinese medicine and have far-reaching influence.

The Wei-Jin-Northern and Southern Dynasties Civilization

The Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties (220–589) were the period in Chinese history when the unified Qin and Han dynasties fell apart into divided regimes. It was a time of changing dynasties, continuous wars and turmoil, sharpened national conflicts, and intensified political contentions between influential families. The centralized imperial power was weakened and unstable. China entered a phase of considerable complexity and turbulence. The progress of civilization is inseparable from the historical process. The turbulent Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties brought many setbacks and even some regression to Chinese civilization. However, civilization often moves forward alongside the twists and turns of history. Outstanding achievements were made in the material, institutional, and spiritual civilizations during the period. In particular, the exchange and blending among various ethnic groups were unprecedentedly remarkable, laying a solid foundation for the Sui and Tang dynasties to rebuild a unified multi-ethnic country.

The Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties innovated many institutional systems. They replaced the *chaju* (commandery quota or elevation after examination) system with the *jiupin zhongzheng* (method of classifying officials into nine ranks). In its early implementation, the *jiupin zhongzheng* system strengthened the monarch's centralized power and also vigorously rectified such corrupt practices as favoritism, fraud, and seeking personal fame and gains that ran rampant during the Han Dynasty. However, as the political power of influential families increased, the nine-rank system gradually lost its advantage because it had become a tool for these families to control the official-selecting process. At the same time, the *ceshi* method that had originated in the Han Dynasty was further developed. *Ceshi* means answering questions about political affairs and Chinese Classic Studies, with those getting the highest scores selected as officials. It was similar to modern examination. Especially, in Liang, one of the Southern dynasties, people were allowed to apply for the examinations, which paved the way for the imperial examination system to be implemented in the coming Sui and Tang dynasties. Therefore, it was of immense

significance in the progress of history. The Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties were also a time when Chinese thought and culture significantly developed, flourished, and transformed. It has been referred to as another intellectual liberation movement period after the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. *Xuanxue* (Dark Learning or neo-Taoism), which emerged during the Wei and Jin dynasties, broke off the shackles of the classics of the two Han dynasties, advocating individual awakening and rational speculation and focusing on the thought about issues from the ontological perspectives of “being” and “nothingness.” Thus, it left a lot of precious legacy in the history of Chinese philosophy. The Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties saw the emergence of many important thinkers, including He Yan, Wang Bi, Ji Kang, Xiang Xiu, Guo Xiang, Pei Wei, Yang Quan, Bao Jingyan, and Fan Zhen. Religions and religious thought and culture were unprecedentedly prosperous. After its introduction to China in the Han Dynasty, Buddhism did not spread far and had limited believers during the early days. During the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties, the places and converts it reached surged. Meanwhile, it was more obviously Sinicized. The Tiantishan Cave in Wuwei, the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, the Yungang Grottoes in Datong, the Longmen Grottoes in Longmen, the Xiangtangshan Caves in Handan, and the Maijishan Grottoes in Tianshui were all built during this period and display localized artistic characteristics. Famous Buddhist monks like Dao'an, Huiyuan, Kumarajiva, Fotudeng, Zhu Daosheng, and Bodhidharma all lived in the period and made significant contributions to the development of Buddhism. Taoist masters Ge Hong, Lu Xiujing, Tao Hongjing, Kou Qianzhi, and others in the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties transformed China's native Taoism by formulating a unique theory and a system, laying an important foundation for its development into a religion. The establishment of the theoretical systems of Buddhism and Taoism led to their collision with Confucianism and Dark Learning. Through their exchange and integration, they enriched the connotation of Chinese civilization and diversified the Chinese cultural structure.

The most significant achievement of the civilization in the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties was the great integration of ethnic groups. China has been a multi-ethnic country since the pre-Qin period. Many ethnic groups have lived around the Central Plains, inextricably linked with the Huaxia civilization therein. For several centuries during the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties, this interaction was even closer due to the changes in the political, economic, and military factors, as well as the natural environment. The interactions and integration between the dynasties on the Central Plains with the surrounding ethnic groups became unprecedentedly frequent. The civilizations of Xiongnu, Xianbei, Jie, Di, Qiang, Wuhuan, Rouran, and other ethnic groups in the northwest and many other ethnic minorities in the southwest were deeply blended with the Chinese civilization on the Central Plains. The multi-century integration of the various ethnic peoples were on a magnificent scale. As a result, the Chinese nation were featured with more diverse cultures and close-knit ethnic communities. It was hard to distinguish each other's ethnic backgrounds from blood relationships alone. Such a situation laid a solid foundation for establishing a unified multi-ethnic state in the Sui and Tang dynasties.

The Sui-Tang Civilization

The Sui Dynasty (581–618) lasted 38 years, whereas the Tang Dynasty (618–907) remained for 290 years. Both took Chang'an as the capital and Luoyang as the eastern capital. Sui and Tang were another two unified dynasties that rose after the Qin and Han in Chinese history. They ended the nearly 400 years of national division during the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties. They catapulted Chinese civilization to a new height by inheriting the cultural heritage of the immediately preceding dynasties.

The ruling class of the Sui and Tang dynasties took the initiative of learning from the experiences and lessons of the Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, and the Northern and Southern dynasties. They improved the great-unification governance system by cleaning up political corruption, paying attention to the people, and promoting socio-economic development. Both dynasties achieved considerable results. In particular, the Tang Dynasty handled ethnic relations and foreign exchange with an open and broad mind, creating a heyday of state governance in Chinese history. The “Good Government of the Zhenguan Era” and the “Prosperous Years of the Kaiyuan Era” have been praised for over a millennium. The Sui and Tang dynasties reformed the institutional civilization by weeding through the old to bring forth the new. They replaced the three-lord-and-nine-ministry system with the three-department-and-six-ministry system. The division of labor and responsibilities of the central administrative center and the hierarchy were more distinct. The new system was a major innovation in institutional civilization by avoiding excessive concentration of power in the *Zaixiang* (grand chancellor) and reducing decision-making mistakes. The Sui and Tang dynasties established the *keju* (imperial examination) system, under which examinations were held for *xiucai* (cultivated talent), *mingjing* (classicist), *jinshi* (presented scholar), *mingfa* (expert in law) and other types of talents. The test scores became the major criteria for official selection instead of the examinees' family backgrounds. Everyone could apply for the exams and compete fairly with others. Since then, China's talent selection system has been transformed from recommendation-based to examination-based, a major innovation in human political civilization. The Sui and Tang dynasties also enriched Chinese material civilization. Li Shimin, Emperor Taizong of Tang, who thought of possible dangers in times of peace, exerted himself to make the Tang Dynasty prosperous. He took advice with an open mind, attached importance to people's livelihood, and reduced levies and corvées. As a result, the national economy recovered rapidly. During the Zhenguan era, Tang China enjoyed low consumer prices, stable social order, and an increased population. A period of the “Good Government of the Zhenguan Era” arrived “and has never been so prosperous since ancient times,” according to a historian of the Tang Dynasty. During the Kaiyuan and Tianbao periods of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang, the dynasty saw an unexpectedly thriving economy. Its population reached 70 million, accounting for about one-third of the world's total population at that time. Chang'an (present-day Xi'an), the capital of the Tang Dynasty, was a world-famous metropolis with a population of more than a million. The government developed China into a unified multi-ethnic nation by properly handling ethnic relations and bringing it into a new

phase of history. People from the surrounding nations referred to Emperor Taizong of Tang as the “Heavenly Khan” with due respect. The Tang Dynasty’s civilization profoundly impacted the local ethnic regimes of Tubo, Nanzhao, and Bohai. The spiritual civilization of the splendid Tang Dynasty was diverse and inclusive, spreading near and far worldwide. Buddhism completed its Sinicization in the Tang Dynasty and reached its peak. Many Buddhist sects, such as Zen, Pure Land, Tantric, and Huayan, were established during the dynasty. Taoism, supported by the Tang emperors of the Li family, regarded Laozi, whose name was Li Er, as their ancestor, blessing the religion with much space for development. Simultaneously, Nestorianism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Islam, and other foreign religions were also introduced into China. Poetry was the zenith of Tang Dynasty literature. *Quan Tangshi (Complete Tang Poems)* contains nearly 50,000 Tang poems by more than 2300 poets, which are powerful in expression and rich in connotation. Li Bai, Du Fu, and Bai Juyi were outstanding representative Tang poets. The civilization of the Tang Dynasty spread far and wide, and the people of many countries still refer to the Chinese as Tang people. Chang’an was home to envoys, businessmen, monks, and visiting students from all over the world. Tang’s economic and cultural exchange with Silla (a Korean kingdom) and Japan were frequent. Its political and legal systems, urban architectural structures, literature and art, and religious diversity and inclusiveness profoundly impacted the neighboring countries.

The Song-Yuan Civilization

With the fall of the Tang Dynasty, China split into the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms. Zhao Kuangyin, a general of the Later Zhou Dynasty, launched a mutiny and seized the Later Zhou throne. He established the Northern Song Dynasty and set the capital in Kaifeng. The Northern Song Dynasty eliminated the separatist forces since the end of the Tang Dynasty and achieved China’s partial unity. Alongside the Northern Song Dynasty were Liao (916–1125) established by the Khitan, Western Xia (1038–1227) established by the Dangxiang clan, and Jin (1115–1234) founded by the Jurchen clan. In 1125 and 1127, Jurchen Jin destroyed the Liao and the Northern Song, respectively. The Song Dynasty moved to the south and established its capital in Lin’an (today’s Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province). The dynasty was known as the Southern Song and it confronted the Jurchen Jin, which the Mongols toppled in 1234 before it destroyed the Southern Song in 1279 and established the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), opening a new leaf of a unified multi-ethnic nation again in Chinese history. Song-Yuan civilization was the Chinese civilization jointly created by all ethnic groups and regimes from the 10th to the fourteenth century. During this period, the multiple Chinese ethnic peoples collided, interacted, and mingled with each other under the joint promotion of the various ethnic regimes, facilitating China’s development and bringing about a splendid civilization of a multi-ethnic nation.

The Song and Yuan dynasties were a time that saw the development and innovation of Chinese institutional civilization. They learned lessons from the previous dynasties and strengthened royal centralism. The Northern Song Dynasty took away the military power from their generals to prevent them from interfering in politics.

It also significantly weakened the military authority of the grand chancellor. With the military, financial, and judicial powers taken over from the local sub-prefectures and prefectures, the centralized power of the government with the emperor as the core was dramatically boosted. The Song improved the imperial examination system and greatly strengthened the political and social foundation of its ruling class. The Yuan Dynasty created a unified multi-ethnic country with an unprecedentedly vast territory. It innovated governance of such a large country based on the inherited centralized system that had originated from the previous dynasties on the Central Plains. It substituted a one-department system for the three-department-and-six-ministry system. The *Zhongshusheng* (Central Secretariat) became the highest administrative agency of the court, and branch secretariats were the highest agencies of local governments. The transition to branch-secretariat system was a major reform of the local organizational system in ancient China and had a far-reaching influence on later generations. Xizang, Penghu, and Ryukyu (today's Taiwan) were officially incorporated into China's territory in the Yuan Dynasty, which placed them under the central government's direct administration. The Liao, Xia, and Jurchen Jin also innovated regarding their institutional civilization. Their innovations, such as the Liao's Southern and Northern Administrations and the Jurchen Jin's Battalion-Company system, enriched the connotation of the Chinese institutional civilization. The Song and Yuan dynasties enjoyed highly developed material civilization. Three of China's "Four Great Inventions," i.e. gunpowder, compass, and movable-type printing, were invented, improved, and promulgated in the Song Dynasty. China's economic center also moved from the north to the south in the era. Simultaneously, the Maritime Silk Road gradually replaced the Land Silk Road and became the main channel for Sino-foreign economic and cultural exchange. A large number of industrial and commercial cities such as Kaifeng, Dadu (in today's Beijing), Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Quanzhou, Chengdu, and Yangzhou were prosperous and wealthy. During the reign of Emperor Shizu of Yuan (1215–1294), the Italian traveler Marco Polo came to China, where he lived for 17 years and traveled to many places. After returning to Italy, he shared his experiences with the Europeans and aroused their interest in China. The Song and Yuan dynasties were an active and transformative period of Chinese spiritual civilization. Thinkers represented by Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, Cheng Yi, Cheng Hao, Shao Yong, Zhu Xi, and Lu Jiuyuan structured Neo-Confucianism, gradually turning it into the mainstream ideology in the Southern Song Dynasty. Neo-Confucianism borrowed from Buddhism and Taoism, focusing on interpreting Confucianism from the perspectives of "nature" and "reason." Chinese classic studies progressed from textual studies to the examination of moral principles, representing a new height in the development of ancient Chinese theoretical thinking. Song Dynasty *ci*-poetry is a representative genre of Song Dynasty literature. Many *ci* poets of the *Wanyue* (Graceful and Restrained) School and the *Haofang* (Heroic) School emerged during the dynasty, such as Yan Shu, Fan Zhongyan, Ouyang Xiu, Su Shi, Liu Yong, Xin Qiji, and Li Qingzhao. The calligraphy and painting arts of the Song and Yuan dynasties were outstanding due to the famous calligraphers and painters such as Su Shi, Huang Tingjian, Mi Fu, Zhao Mengfu, Zhang Zeduan, and Huang Gongwang. *Along the River During the Qingming Festival* created by Zhang

Zeduan in the Northern Song Dynasty depicts the prosperity of the East Capital (Bianliang or present-day Kaifeng), showing a realistic painting style. Huang Gongwang's *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* describes the scenery on both sides of the Fuchun River in autumn with a profound artistic conception and proper arrangement of the images and space. It is praised as the cream-of-the-crop painting "as famous as Wang Xizhi's *Preface to the Poems Collected from the Orchid Pavilion*," the best calligraphic piece in Chinese history. The *qu* (a form of poetry used as lyrics of dramas) and *zaju* (a form of opera) of the Yuan Dynasty are exquisite performing arts. Representatives of the arts were Guan Hanqing's *The Injustice to Dou E* and Wang Shifu's *Romance of the Western Chamber*. Highly artistic, realistic, and close to the people, the *qu* and *zaju* were the products of the Song's urban economic development and the bustling activities of the city dwellers.

The Ming-Qing Civilization

The Ming and Qing were the last two dynasties of traditional Chinese society, and it was also a period of transition from ancient to modern society in China. The Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) initially had its capital in Nanjing before moving to Beijing in the 19th year of the Yongle reign (1421). The dynasty lasted 277 years. The Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) also had its capital in Beijing and lasted 268 years. Historically, the Qing is divided into two periods: before and after the Opium War of 1840. In the early period (1644–1840), the Qing enjoyed a prosperous economy and a stable social order. It reached its peak in the three reigns of Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong, known in history as the "High Qing Era." In the later period (1840–1912), the dynasty lost part of its sovereignty and led China to a decline due to Qing government's corruption and Western colonialist forces' invasion. The Qing government was forced to sign a series of unequal treaties with foreign powers, and China fell into the abyss of a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. The Chinese nation was at the juncture of life and death.

The Ming and Qing dynasties played an essential role in the history of the development of Chinese civilization.

- (1) The unified multi-ethnic China in the Ming and Qing dynasties was further consolidated and developed. After the Yongle Emperor relocated the capital to Beijing, the northern frontier of the Ming Dynasty was consolidated. Especially, in the 17th year of Yongle's reign (1409), the Ming Dynasty set up the Regional Military Commission in Nurgan (today's Tyr on the lower reaches of the Heilong River in Russia). As the highest military and political agency, it had jurisdiction over the vast territory from the Sea of Japan in the east, *Wuliangha Sanwei* (Uriyanqat three commanderies) in the west, Yalu River in the south, and the Outer Khingan Mountains in the north, including today's Sakhalin Island of Russia. The Ming Dynasty dispatched officials to inspect Nurgan, built the Yongning Temple, and erected the Yongning Temple Stele to commemorate the founding of the temple. The stele testifies to the Ming Dynasty's administrative management of the Heilong River Basin. The Ming Dynasty strengthened the control of Xizang and set up a post road with post stations leading from

Yazhou (present-day Ya'an, Sichuan) to Ü-Tsang (Xizang). It canonized the leaders of various religious sects in Xizang and invited them to Beijing. The Yongle Emperor set up Guizhou Province in the southwest, strengthening the Ming Dynasty's administration of the region. The Qing Dynasty significantly contributed to developing a unified multi-ethnic country, highlighted in the territory's stability and establishment. The Kangxi Emperor quelled the Revolt of the Three Feudatories representing the local separatist forces, recovered Taiwan held by Zheng Chenggong's descendants who had tried to separate it from China, and set up Taiwan Prefecture subordinate to Fujian Province. The Kangxi Emperor led three expeditions in person against the Dzungar Khanate's revolt, crushing its separatist attempt and ensuring the unity and stability of the northern frontier. The Yongzheng Emperor quelled the rebellion of Lobsang Tenzin, chief of the Khoshut Mongolian tribe, and placed Qinghai under the direct administration of the Qing government. The Qianlong Emperor suppressed the rebellion led by Amursana, prince of the Khoit-Oirat tribe that ruled over parts of Dzungaria, putting an end to the 67-year-long anti-separation struggle against the Dzungar Khanate. He also crushed the revolt of the Altishahr Khojas in Xinjiang and put the vast land on the south side of the Tianshan under the Qing Dynasty's rule. The Qing government made continuous efforts to strengthen the administration of Xizang, including stationing troops in Xizang to consolidate the garrison and installing the Grand Minister Resident of Xizang to manage the affairs of Xizang. The Qianlong Emperor also promulgated the *29-Article Ordinance for the More Effective Governing of Xizang*, which shows respect for the religious leaders, the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, while emphasizing the role of the Qing minister stationed in Xizang. Putting political power above religious one was a successful practice of the Qing Dynasty in its governance of Xizang. In the southwest, the Qing government abolished the *tusi* chief-tain system, bureaucratized native officers, and strengthened the Qing government's centralized control over the southwest frontier. The Qing government also signed the *Treaty of Nerchinsk* with Tsarist Russia to demarcate the eastern border between China and Russia. Through these efforts, the Qing Dynasty established a country with a vast territory extending from Taiwan and Sakhalin Island in the east, Pamirs and Lake Balkhash in the west, Outer Khingan Range and the Sayan Mountains in the north, and Zengmu Shoal in the Nansha Islands in the south. While China had been a unified multi-ethnic nation since antiquity, the degree of unification during the past dynasties had never reached the height of the early Qing Dynasty. The great cause of unification accomplished by the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong emperors laid the foundation for the territorial map of modern China. It led to the formation of a close relationship among the various ethnic groups with the ethnic Han as the main body and established China as a unified multi-ethnic world power. With a profound effect on the trend of modern Chinese history, it was the great contribution of the Qing Dynasty to Chinese civilization.

- (2) The Ming and Qing dynasties were an important period of China's economic and social transformation. China's traditional economy was mainly based on

agriculture. By the middle and late Ming Dynasty, agricultural production and handicraft techniques had both significantly developed, commercialization had become more apparent, and a national commercial market had begun to form. Regarding agricultural production, rice cultivation had expanded from the south to the north. Grain crops and cash crops such as sweet potatoes, corn, peanuts, and tobacco originating in foreign countries were introduced into China. Farmers in many regions grew more cotton, silkworm mulberry, tobacco, and other cash crops to generate higher income. They put them on the market, promoting agricultural produce's commercialization and marketization. Regional handicraft centers had taken shape: Suzhou became the silk industry center, Songjiang the cotton textile industry center, Wuhu the dyeing industry center, and Jingdezhen the ceramic industry center. The development of the commodity economy requires a corresponding market. Accordingly, a national commercial market began to form in the late Ming Dynasty. Famous merchant guilds such as Huizhou Merchants and Shanxi Merchants came into being, with their footprints covering the entire country. Town dwellers composed of small- and mid-size merchants also emerged at this time, which was new in the changing social class structure of the Ming Dynasty. It is worth noting that while the domestic commodity and the market economies prospered and developed, overseas trade also grew by leaps and bounds. A large amount of silver flew into China through the Maritime Silk Road and silver became the main currency in the middle of the Ming Dynasty. The prosperity of the economy promoted the change in production relations. In the late Ming Dynasty, capitalist production relations germinated in the industries of cotton spinning, silk weaving, porcelain making, mining and metallurgy, and others in Jiangnan and the southeastern coastal areas. The development was manifested in the relaxation of personal dependence, scale operation of private production, and the regular appearance of hired laborers. The changes and development of China's economy and society starting in the middle and late Ming Dynasty continued till the Opium War. They reached a climax during the reigns of emperors Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty. After the Opium War, however, Western colonialists invasion and the Qing government's corruption brought the development to a standstill, plunging China into a situation where it was backward and vulnerable to foreign bullies.

- (3) The Ming and Qing dynasties were a new stage in Chinese intellectual and cultural development. First, the idealist Neo-Confucianism represented by Wang Yangming became the mainstream ideology in the latter part of the Ming Dynasty. Also known as Yangmingism or the School of the Heart, it broke through the shackles of Cheng-Zhu's School of Principle. Wang Yangming believes that the "heart" is an all-encompassing noumenon. People only need "follow their conscience through self-examination" to acquire understanding. The outer world is only the object that confirms the inner world. Though Yangmingism may be a philosophical system of subjective idealism, it emphasizes the unity of knowledge and action, solving external difficulties through inner exploration, and advocating the idea that everyone can be a saint. Therefore, it had

positive significance for overcoming the drawbacks and constraints of Cheng-Zhu's School of Principle and gained a large following. Second, early Enlightenment thinkers emerged in China. The drastic social changes during the Ming and Qing dynasties prompted scholars to reflect on the state affairs of China. Huang Zongxi, Gu Yanwu, and Wang Fuzhi represented the outstanding thinkers of the early Qing Dynasty. Huang Zongxi vigorously criticized the autocratic monarchy, Gu Yanwu advocated a pragmatic style of study, and Wang Fuzhi systematically sorted out and criticized China's thousands of years of traditional academics as he expressed an intense hatred for the autocratic monarchy. Their ideas had a significant impact on later generations. Third, the exchange of ideas between China and foreign countries entered a new era. There were many periods in Chinese history when Chinese and foreign intellectual and cultural exchanges were frequent, but the Ming and Qing dynasties excelled in breadth and depth. From the Ming Dynasty, Western missionaries began to trickle into China, bringing Western knowledge with religious doctrines to China. Their arrival was of positive significance for the growth of Chinese scientific knowledge. At the same time, Chinese traditional culture, especially Confucianism, was also introduced to the West through the missionaries, which profoundly impacted the creation of European Enlightenment thought in the eighteenth century. It was the first systematic, large-scale intellectual and cultural exchange between the East and the West. The Ming and Qing dynasties' intellectual and cultural achievements were far more than what has been enumerated. Extraordinary accomplishments were achieved in literature, including novels, plays, and poetry. *Yongle Dadian* (*The Yongle Encyclopedia*), *Siku Quanshu* (*Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature*), and the Qian-Jia School's effort to compile and study Confucian texts with philological methods were of far-reaching significance for the inheritance and development of Chinese culture (Fig. 1.4).

Civilization of the Modern Times

This civilization of the modern times refers to the Chinese civilization from 1840 to 1949. In the Opium War of 1840, western powers' warships and cannons forced China to open up. The Western colonialists began to bully the ancient "Oriental Lion." The



Fig. 1.4 Kangxi emperor's southern inspection tour

country was humiliated, the people inflicted with miseries, and the Chinese civilization covered with dust. The Chinese nation suffered an unprecedented catastrophe. However, the Chinese people did not give in. On the contrary, they rose up to fight, struggled for self-improvement, and started the journey of striving for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

In the face of adversity, even some elements of the decadent Qing court wanted to “seek what is new.” Some intellectuals with a world vision realized the importance of advanced Western science and technology. They put forward the proposition of “learning from foreigners their skills to fight them.” At the same time, the ruling class also turned its attention to the West, establishing a modern navy, factories, and modern schools. A series of self-improvement measures promoted China’s modernization to a certain extent. The vigorous Westernization Movement seemed to have brought a glimmer of hope to the declining Qing Dynasty. However, the disastrous defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895 and the signing of the *Treaty of Shimonoseki* shattered this “dream” in one fell swoop. The Westernization Movement ended in bankruptcy.

Seeing that neither science and technology nor military equipment could save China, intellectuals with a breadth of vision began to take stock and realized that “reforms must be implemented.” After Germany occupied Jiaozhou Bay, Shandong, in the winter of 1897, Kang Youwei presented a memorial to the Guangxu Emperor to request reforms. In June the following year (“Wuxu” year in the traditional Chinese lunisolar calendar), the Wuxu Reform, also known as the Hundred Days’ Reform, began. The reformists advocated abolishing the pedantic style of writing the “eight-legged essays” for imperial examinations, building a modern education system, encouraging the free airing of views, and hiring people of intelligence and integrity. They even proposed drawing up a constitution and establishing a national assembly. These measures angered the feudal diehards headed by Empress Dowager Cixi, who killed the hundred-day reform movement in its infancy. Although the Hundred Days’ Reform failed, it set off the first trend of intellectual emancipation in modern China, awakened the Chinese people, encouraged them to strive for progress, and brought the Chinese national bourgeoisie to the political stage. It became the prelude to the Democratic Revolution led by the Chinese national bourgeoisie.

On October 10, 1911, the gunshots from Wuchang City lifted the curtain on the modern national Democratic Revolution in China in its real sense, sending the bourgeois revolutionaries onto the stage of history. On January 1, 1912, Sun Yat-sen announced the official establishment of the Republic of China in Nanjing and took office as the provisional president. On February 12, the Xuantong Emperor gave up the throne, ending the reign of the Qing, China’s last feudal dynasty. The Revolution of 1911 immensely promoted the intellectual liberation of the Chinese nation, spread the democratic and republic ideas, started China’s progressive trend, and shook the foundation of the old ruling order. The establishment of the first republic in Asia in the land of China galvanized the transformation of Chinese society with great shocking force. It was an attempt to explore the way to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. However, the fruits of the revolution soon fell into the hands of the Beiyang warlords represented by Yuan Shikai, and the historical task of national

independence and prosperity became fruitless. The failure of the 1911 Revolution eventually proved that capitalism could neither save China nor revive its civilization. As Mao Zedong said, “China cannot take the capitalist road. China is featured with a large population, many ethnic groups, a long history of feudal society, and uneven regional development. Besides, it has been bullied by imperialism per the law of the jungle, which impoverished the Chinese and disintegrated China. To engage in capitalism can only turn China into a vassal of other countries.”

In modern times, countless Chinese people with lofty ideals pondered transforming Chinese civilization, hoping to do it by learning from the West or even “completely Westernize China” for survival. But all kinds of plans for national salvation or modernization failed. To the last analysis, the failure was due to no guidance of advanced theories and leadership of advanced political parties armed with the advanced theories. Without the leadership of the advanced political parties, it would be impossible to overthrow the three mountains—imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism—weighing down on the backs of the Chinese people. Nor would it be possible to realize the true independence of the country and the nation.

The October Revolution brought Marxism-Leninism to China as a leading ideology for the Chinese people trying to save their nation from doom and strive for survival. Since then, China has ushered in a new life and opened a new chapter of its civilization. The May Fourth Movement was a great patriotic and revolutionary campaign pioneered by advanced young intellectuals and participated by the Chinese people from all walks of life to resolutely fight imperialism and feudalism. It was a great social revolutionary movement launched by the Chinese people to save the nation from subjugation, safeguard national dignity, and pool national strength. It was a great enlightenment movement and a new cultural campaign for disseminating new thoughts, culture, and knowledge. It has significantly inspired the Chinese people and nation to achieve national rejuvenation with great confidence.

China’s advanced elements spread new ideas and culture in the pursuit of truth, bravely broke away from feudal thoughts, and vigorously attacked the old feudal ethics, morality, thinking, and culture that had shackled the Chinese for thousands of years. The May Fourth Movement changed the previous situation where there had been only awakened revolutionaries without awakened masses of people. It led to a widespread awakening of the people and the nation for the first time since the Opium Wars. Baptized by the May Fourth Movement, more and more advanced Chinese elements rallied under the banner of Marxism. In 1921, the Communist Party of China was officially established, opening a new page in Chinese civilization.

To realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the CPC has united the Chinese people and led them in a bloody battle. After tenaciously fighting despite repeated setbacks, it made remarkable achievements in the New Democratic Revolution. The CPC opposed the armed counter-revolution with armed revolution, including the Northern Expedition, the Agrarian Revolutionary War, the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, and the War of Liberation. Finally, it overthrew the three mountains of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism and established the People’s Republic of China, where the people are the masters of

the country, and realized national independence and people's liberation. The victory of the New Democratic Revolution ultimately ended the history of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal status of the old Chinese society. It ended the messy situation of the old China, abolished all the unequal treaties imposed on China by the foreign powers, and took away all the privileges enjoyed by imperialists in China, creating the fundamental social conditions for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Through tenacious struggle, the Party and the people showed the world that the Chinese people had stood up and the time in which the Chinese nation could be bullied and abused was gone and would never return.

Civilization of Contemporary Times

The civilization of contemporary times refers to the Chinese civilization from the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to the present. Since the PRC's establishment, the Chinese people have made tremendous achievements in the socialist revolution and construction through self-reliance and resilience under the leadership of the CPC. They have realized the most extensive and profound social transformation in the history of the Chinese nation and leaped into a socialist society from a populous, impoverished, and illiterate country in the east. Through tenacious struggle, the Party and the people showed the world that the Chinese people were not only capable of dismantling the old world, but also of building a new one, that only socialism could save China, and that only socialism could develop China.

The Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CPC held in December 1978 opened a new era when China initiated reform and opening up and embarked on socialist modernization. The Chinese communists, as their chief representative, united and led the whole Party and the entire nation in conducting a thorough review of the experience gained and lessons learned since the founding of the People's Republic of China. On this basis, and by focusing on the fundamental questions of what socialism is and how to build it and drawing lessons from the history of world socialism, they established Deng Xiaoping Theory, and devoted their efforts to freeing minds and seeking truth from facts. The historic decision was made to shift the focus of the Party and the country's work onto economic development and to launch the reform and opening up drive. Chinese communists brought the essence of socialism to light, set the basic line for the primary stage of socialism, and made it clear that China would follow its own path and build socialism with Chinese characteristics. They provided sensible answers to a series of basic questions on building socialism with Chinese characteristics, and formulated a development strategy for basically achieving socialist modernization by the middle of the twenty-first century through a three-step approach. They thus succeeded in founding socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Chinese communists, with Comrade Jiang Zemin as their chief representative, united and led the whole party and the entire nation in upholding the party's basic theory and line, deepening their understanding of what socialism is and how to build it, and what kind of party to build and how to build it. On this basis, they formed the Theory of Three Represents. In the face of complex domestic and international situations and serious setbacks confronting world socialism, they safeguarded socialism

with Chinese characteristics. They defined building a socialist market economy as an objective of reform. They set a basic framework in this regard. They established a basic economic system for the primary stage of socialism under which public ownership is the mainstay and diverse forms of ownership develop together, as well as an income distribution system under which distribution according to work is the mainstay, with multiple forms of distribution existing alongside it. They opened up new horizons for reform and opening up across all fronts and advanced the great new project of Party building. All these efforts successfully helped launch socialism with Chinese characteristics into the twenty-first century.

Chinese communists, with Comrade Hu Jintao as their chief representative, united and led the whole Party and the nation in advancing practical, theoretical, and institutional innovations while building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. They gained a deep understanding of major questions, such as what kind of development to pursue and how to pursue it under new circumstances. They provided clear answers to these questions, thus forming the Scientific Outlook on Development. Taking advantage of a crucial period of strategic opportunity, they focused their energy on development, emphasizing comprehensive, balanced, and sustainable development that put the people first. They worked hard to ensure and improve people's wellbeing, promote social fairness and justice, bolster the Party's governance capacity, and maintain its advanced nature. In doing so, they succeeded in upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics under new circumstances.

In the new era of reform and opening up, the CPC upheld and developed Marxism in light of new practices and the features of the times and effectively answered a series of basic questions regarding socialism with Chinese characteristics, including development path, stage of development, fundamental tasks, development drivers, development strategies, political guarantee, national reunification, diplomacy and international strategy, leadership, and forces to rely on, thereby forming the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics and achieving a new breakthrough in adapting Marxism to the Chinese context. The CPC led the Chinese in freeing their minds and forging ahead and made remarkable achievements in reform and opening up and in socialist modernization. It enabled China to transform itself from a highly centralized planned economy to a socialist market economy brimming with vitality and from a country that was largely isolated into one that is open to the outside world across the board. It also enabled China to achieve the historic transformation from a country with relatively backward productive forces to the world's second-largest economy and to make the historic strides of raising the living standards of its people from bare subsistence moderate prosperity in general and then toward moderate prosperity in all respects. It has created the "two miracles" catching the world's attention: rapid economic growth and enduring social stability. It promoted the great leap of the Chinese nation from standing up to growing prosperous, opening up the way for developing countries to modernize themselves and providing new options for countries and nations who want to accelerate development while preserving their independence. Through tenacious struggle, the Party and the people showed the world that reform and opening up was a crucial move in making China what it is today, that socialism with Chinese characteristics is the correct road that has led the

country toward development and prosperity, and that China has caught up with the times in great strides.

Socialism with Chinese characteristics is a fundamental achievement of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese people, forged through innumerable hardships and great sacrifices. It is the right path for us to achieve national rejuvenation. Following the Party's 18th National Congress, socialism with Chinese characteristics entered a new era. Chinese communists, with President Xi Jinping as their chief representative, have established Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era on the basis of adapting the basic tenets of Marxism to China's specific realities and its fine traditional culture, upholding Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents, and the Scientific Outlook on Development, thoroughly reviewing and fully applying the historical experience gained since the founding of the Party, and proceeding from new realities. President Xi Jinping, through meticulous assessment and deep reflection on a number of major theoretical and practical questions regarding the cause of the Party and the country in the new era, has set forth a series of original new ideas, thoughts, and strategies on national governance revolving around the central questions of our times: what kind of socialism with Chinese characteristics we should uphold and develop in this new era, what kind of great modern socialist country we should build, and what kind of Marxist party exercising long-term governance we should develop, as well as how we should go about achieving these tasks. He is thus the principal founder of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the Marxism of contemporary China and the twenty-first century. It embodies the best of the Chinese culture and ethos in our times and represents a new breakthrough in adapting *Marxism* to the Chinese context.

New Form of Human Civilization

As President Xi Jinping pointed out, the great social transformations that contemporary China has undergone are not a natural continuation of our country's historical and cultural traditions, not a mechanical application of the templates designed by authors of Marxist classics, nor a copy of the socialist practice in other countries or foreign models of modernization. Instead, they have pioneered a uniquely Chinese path to modernization, creating a new model for human advancement.

The new form of human civilization is another great creation in the history of the Chinese nation. Where the contents of the new form of civilization are concerned, the "newness" is represented by innovations made in material, political, cultural-ethical, social, and ecological terms. Regarding the innovation of the new form of civilization, the "newness" is manifested in the intellectual concept, institutional system, development path, cultural significance, and social practice. It is not a mechanical application or copy of any other civilization nor a partial repair and improvement of traditional civilization. From the perspective of the basis for the new form of civilization's emergence, the "newness" is embodied in taking the advanced socialist culture as the noumenon and fully drawing on the revolutionary culture, the excellent traditional Chinese culture, and all the fruits of human civilizations. It is an epoch-making overall civilization innovation formed in the great practice of

socialism with Chinese characteristics. The new form of human civilization created by the people under the leadership of the CPC is another great civilization created by the Chinese nation following the creation of many civilizations in history. It shines brilliantly in the spectrum of human civilizations and is at the forefront of its progress.

The new form of human civilization adheres to the people-centered and people-first approach. The Chinese culture has always been people-oriented. The CPC has always upheld the purpose of wholeheartedly serving the people and adhered to the people-centered development idea. It has always pursued realizing, safeguarding, and developing the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people as the ultimate goal of its work and taken “whether the people are satisfied” as the highest standard for guiding, evaluating, and testing governance achievements. People-centered nature is the essential attribute of this new form of civilization. China won a complete victory in its fight against poverty in the important year when the CPC was celebrating its centennial. All of the 98.99 million rural residents, 832 counties and 128,000 villages that fell below the current poverty line have been lifted out of poverty. Regional poverty has been eliminated on the whole, and the arduous task of eradicating absolute poverty has been completed, representing yet another miraculous achievement and a glorious chapter in mankind’s anti-poverty history. The CPC has realized the first centenary goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, bringing about a landmark resolution to the problem of absolute poverty in China. Today, China is building socialist modernization in an all-round way and striving to realize the second centenary goal. China will continue to liberate and develop productive forces, promote high-quality economic development, and make the economic pie bigger. At the same time, it will also respond to the people’s demands for a better life by deepening the reform of systems and mechanisms so that more people can enjoy the fruits of development and share the pie. All of this reflects the principle of common prosperity. It is an essential manifestation of the people-centered nature of Chinese civilization.

The new form of human civilization widened the path to realizing the shared value of all human beings. Chinese culture advocates the concepts of “harmony between man and nature” and “harmonious coexistence of man and nature.” Chinese culture embraces the view on association and communication that “you do not do to others what you do not want to be done to yourself.” It also advocates the idea of “seeking common ground while setting aside differences, and getting along with others without necessarily agreeing with them.” Chinese culture makes the Chinese like to “help others realize their dreams.” China has “promoted harmony among all nations” with generosity since antiquity, envisioning “a world where countries treasure their distinct heritages, appreciate other cultures, and promote shared prosperity.” Based on the excellent traditional Chinese culture that advocates promoting harmony among all nations and getting along with other countries without necessarily agreeing with them, President Xi Jinping proposed the idea of building a community with a shared future for mankind. His proposition has put forward a feasible plan for the peaceful coexistence of human civilizations, creating a new path for the development of modern civilization. China’s Belt and Road Initiative advocates exchange and mutual learning among civilizations. While promoting China’s better integration

into the world, it also allows the world to share China's development achievements. The initiative contributes Chinese wisdom and approach to the progress of human civilization.

1.3 Basic Characteristics and Contemporary Values of Chinese Civilization

The Chinese civilization has a long history and has been advancing continuously without interruption. This is rare in the history of human civilization. The rich and colorful progress made in the material, institutional, and cultural-ethical development in the magnificent historical process demonstrates the unique style and charm of Chinese civilization. Therefore, Chinese civilization has its unique characteristics and contemporary values.

Chinese Civilization Is Created by All the Ethnic Groups in China

China has been a multi-ethnic country since ancient times. In different historical periods, there have been ethnic groups with different historical origins, lifestyles, and geographical habitats. In their long history, they communicated and mingled with each other. Some ethnic groups merged with others, while some remained distinct. They have finally formed a multi-ethnic country with the ethnic Han as the main body. The 56 ethnic groups in China today is a legacy of Chinese history. The ethnic Han's predecessor was the Huaxia nationality. The Chinese characters *hua* and *xia* mean "gorgeous clothes and respect for etiquette." In the pre-Qin historical records, it was the ethnic group living in the Yellow River Basin on the Central Plains. That was why Huaxia was synonymous with Zhongguo, which means a state in the middle of the world under heaven. Zhongguo refers to a state's political center, a Central Plains region, or a dynasty therein. Not until the Qing Dynasty did Zhongguo (translated as China) become a proper noun for a multi-ethnic country, with the significance of sovereignty. Liang Qichao was the first to use the term "Chinese nation" in the late Qing era. He used it as a collective term for all the ethnic groups in China and treated it as a national concept corresponding to Zhongguo (China). It has been used till today. Although the Chinese nation embraces many ethnicities, all ethnic groups are integral to the Chinese nation. They are equal and respect each other, and none is superior or inferior to another. In particular, all ethnic groups often respect the common ancestor Yan Huang in terms of ethnic origin. Therefore, the Chinese nation is also known as the descendants of Yan Huang.

Chinese Civilization Attaches Great Importance to the Institutional Construction of Grand Unity

The state is the carrier of civilization, and the shape of the state often embodies the core concept of civilization. Grand unity or grand unification is a typical feature of the traditional Chinese state form, the core of Chinese institutional civilization,

and the foundation for the traditional Chinese national political system. The political concept of centralization was formed in China before the Qin Dynasty. It was applied to practice and became the core of a national system beginning from the Qin and Han dynasties. First, China attaches great importance to the central authority. All the Chinese dynasties emphasized the central government's dominance and authority in the overall arrangement of the national system, forming a unitary state's political tradition lasting thousands of years. Second, China attaches utmost importance to the country's grand unification. National reunification is the premise of grand unity and centralization. It is also the goal that all the dynasties in Chinese history pursued unremittingly. It is testified by the Qin's annexation of the other six states, the Jin Dynasty's conquest of Wu, the Former Qin's attack against the Eastern Jin Dynasty, the Eastern Jin Dynasty's Northern Expedition, the Sui Dynasty's destruction of the Chen Dynasty, the Yuan Dynasty's ruination of the Southern Song Dynasty, the Qing Dynasty's suppression of the Revolt of the Three Feudatories and the rebellions in Xinjiang and Qinghai, and the Kangxi Emperor's recovery of Taiwan. Reunification and division are unavoidable issues in Chinese history. The view that division is conducive to social and economic development is incorrect. There had been long periods of division in Chinese history. During those periods, the economy, society, and culture of specific regions did develop to a certain extent due to certain policies of the separatist regimes, population movement, natural environment, and other factors. But those were not the mainstream, as division brought more disasters to China and its society in history. The main reasons for the divisions in Chinese history were political and ethnic instead of economic, cultural, and religious. Therefore, the split lacked a fundamental foundation. No matter how the breakup happened or which ethnic group initiated it, unity got the upper hand eventually. It is a distinctive feature of China's historical development. Third, China pays particular attention to improving governance capabilities. The role of the central authority in Chinese history was manifested in the characteristics of centralism and the command and governance of state affairs. The decision-making mechanism of an imperial court with the emperor as the core included court conferences, *fengbo* (reviewing the imperial edicts drafted by the Central Secretariat and criticizing, correcting, and returning the memorials submitted by the Department of State Affairs), and *yanjian* (offering advice or remonstrating with a monarch). All of these contained democratic elements to a certain degree. Where the state structure is concerned, ancient China had the prefecture-county system, which "was like the arm commanding the hand, which in turn controlled the fingers." However, it also paid attention to building grassroots rural self-governance systems. In terms of administration, ancient China transitioned from the three-lord-and-nine-minister system to the three-department-and-six-ministry system. Besides the intricate division of labor, China also had a strict inspection and supervision system at local and national levels to ensure officials' cleanliness. Ancient China also had a government document system to "help rule the country," which significantly increased its administrative efficiency. China's traditional political cohesion and executive power have enabled it to concentrate resources to accomplish large undertakings. They have effectively helped China maintain its unity and integrity and coordinate and integrate the interests of different classes and social strata to secure

social stability. China's institutional system of "centralism" was not a design out of thin air by Chinese politicians and thinkers. It has been the product of objective historical needs and development and aligns with China's national conditions.

Chinese Civilization Adheres to the People-oriented Governance Concept

Since the Western Zhou Dynasty, China has gradually shaken off the shackles of theocentric politics. Instead, it has paid attention to the role that people have played in national stability and emphasized that the ruling class must be people-oriented in state governance. *Shang Shu (Book of Documents)*, an ancient collection of Chinese historical documents, states, "The people should be cherished/And not looked down upon/The people are a country's root/Only when the root is firm can the country be tranquil." Guanzi, a statesman and thinker in the Spring and Autumn Period, said, "Decrees may be followed if they follow the aspirations of the people; they may be ineffective if they are against the aspirations of the people." The great thinkers Confucius and Mencius in the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods advocated "benevolence" and "benevolent government," which is rich in people-oriented thinking.

The discussion of the people-oriented thought has never stopped over the thousands of years in Chinese history. At its core is the advocacy that a state must protect, value, and love its people. In traditional Chinese state governance, adjusting land policies, equalizing wealth, emphasizing agriculture while suppressing commerce, cracking down on powerful landlords, and rectifying official governance were all specific measures to apply the people-oriented thought to practice. Chinese history tells us that social development was stable whenever the people-oriented view was implemented. Otherwise, when the concept was not implemented, even leading to social turbulence, society would be unstable, which might even result in the downfall of a dynasty. The people-oriented thought is a precious heritage of Chinese political civilization. Its early appearance, rich connotation, and long duration are rare in the history of world political civilization.

Chinese Civilization Emphasizes Prioritizing the Rule of Virtue over Penalties

"Law is the beginning of governance," and "the heavenly son shares law with the public." There is a rich understanding of the importance, fairness, and justice of the rule of law in the traditional Chinese national institutional system. Such an understanding has given rise to a legal system with Chinese characteristics. The most outstanding feature of the Chinese legal system is the introduction of *li*, which means "rites" or "rules of propriety," into the legal system. The Qin Dynasty's rapid demise has taught that "law alone does not work." The Emperor of Wu of the Han Dynasty introduced Confucianism into its legal system. Such a marriage was manifested in its legislation and law enforcement, forming a feature of "prioritizing the rule of virtue over penalties." Putting the rule of virtue first was the Confucian approach to social governance, which placed penalties in a secondary position. This Confucian line of thinking indicates that people must be selected, employed, and educated per their virtues, and only those who violate moral norms should be penalized.

Under the guidance of this ideology, the Chinese rulers advocated paying attention to people's virtues and meting out punishment with prudence. They believed that law enforcement officials must be well-versed in Confucian ethics, restrained from indiscriminately imposing severe penalties, and be cautious and prudent in administering punishments. In ancient Chinese legality, there were such systems as *zouyan* (submitting doubtful cases to the authorities at the next higher level), *yizui-congqing* (presumption of innocence), judicial inspection and supervision, and especially the multi-level review in case of death sentences. All these manifest the idea of prioritizing the rule of virtue over penalties.

Chinese Civilization Adheres to a System of Selecting and Appointing Capable and Talented Officials

"Arranging candidates for official positions is a top priority for the state." "Great order and prosperity rely on people of intelligence and integrity." Chinese civilization attaches great importance to the selection and employment of talents and has formed a talent selection system with unique Chinese characteristics. First, it paid attention to public opinion, listening to the public's comments on the candidate officials to be selected. There were three ways of selecting officials in ancient China: *chaju* (commandery quota or elevation after examination), *jiupin zhongzheng* (method of classifying officials into nine ranks), and *keju* (imperial examination). The first two were directly related to public opinion in their institutional design. Whether a person could be an official had much to do with his moral cultivation, code of conduct, and evaluation by public opinion. After the implementation of the imperial examination system, personal qualities and public opinion evaluations were integrated into the examination process. Scholars improved their ethic and talent literacy through studying classics, subtly accepted the mainstream ideology, and demonstrated it through examination results. Second, Chinese civilization maintains fairness. The system of selecting officials through examination, represented by *keju*, was finalized in the Sui and Tang dynasties. *Keju* allowed free application, without restrictions on identity, social status, or property ownership. Therefore, it was widely welcomed by the middle and lower classes. Third, Chinese civilization puts virtue before talent. The ancient Chinese official selection system recognized the critical role of morality in officials' administrative tenures, taking Confucian virtues as the first criteria for selection and assessment. Talent and capability came as the secondary criteria. Statesman and historian Sima Guang in the Song Dynasty concluded, "Talent is the aptitude of virtue, and virtue is the commander of talent," fully expressed the gist of ancient China's official selection and appointment system.

Chinese Civilization Pays Attention to Promoting Harmony Among All Nations and Opening to the Outside World

China has gone from "all nations" to one since ancient times, forming its unique worldview. First, it advocates the idea of "the whole world as one community." The Chinese pursue equality and justice without partiality worldwide. *Liji* (*Book of Rites*) proposed, "When the Grand course was pursued, a public and common spirit ruled all under the sky." *Lüshi Chunqiu* (*Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*)

suggested, “Justice brings peace to the world.” All emphasize that only fairness and justice are the correct way to handle foreign relations. Second, China embraces harmonizing with others without necessarily agreeing with them. “Harmony” is an essential concept in Chinese traditional culture. The viewpoints of “great harmony are preserved in union” in the *Book of Changes* and “being impartial and moderate” in *Zhongyong (The Doctrine of the Mean)* reflects the attitude of the Chinese people to pursue the balance of all things. In *The Analects*, Confucius used “getting along with others without necessarily agreeing with them” to describe the noble character of a “superior man.” According to the historian in *Guoyu (Discourses of the States)*, “When harmony is achieved, all things can grow and develop; if they are the same, they cannot develop and continue.” His remarks reflect the Chinese people’s belief that good undertakings need symbiosis and co-prosperity rather than confrontation and hostility. Only then can the “myriad states all enjoy repose.” Third, ancient China advocated using grace and benevolence to appease and placate tribes and people in remote areas. Traditional Chinese culture supports the idea that foreign relations should be handled with “benevolence” and opposes “attacking each other” by force. Therefore, “using grace and benevolence to appease and placate tribes and people” became an essential model for Chinese dynasties to deal with relations with the ethnic regimes and neighboring countries. Fourth, China has been emphasizing opening to the outside world. The Chinese civilization is by no means closed. The economic and cultural exchanges represented by the land and maritime Silk Roads have promoted the social development and mutual benefit of the countries along the routes, including China itself. Through the routes, the outstanding achievements of Chinese civilization have had significant implications on civilizations in Southeast Asia and beyond.

Chinese Civilization Pays Attention to Harmony between Man and Nature

Chinese civilization attaches great importance to ecological environment protection and the harmonious coexistence of man and nature, thus forming unique views of nature and practice. First, it emphasizes conformity to nature. Chinese culture was born of the natural viewpoint of harmony between man and nature, which is rich in dialectical thoughts. It stresses that the movement of heaven is inseparable from all things in the world. If people want to conform to the way of heaven, they must obey and respect nature, and their behavior must conform to the law of the heavenly bodies and the four seasons of heaven. Second, it emphasizes the symbiosis of all things. The historian in *Guoyu (Discourses of the States)* said, “When harmony is achieved, all things can grow and develop; if they are the same, they cannot develop and continue.” Xunzi suggested, “Everything exists by relying on its kind,” and “All things that grow live in harmony and benefit from the nourishment of nature.” Zhuangzi claimed, “Heaven, Earth, and I were produced together, and all things and I are one.” Zhang Zai declared, “All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things and I were born of Heaven and Earth.” All the quotes are scientific understandings of the coexistence of all things, conformity to nature, and the emphasis on the significance of respecting the laws of nature. Third, China has advocated ecological balance and sustainable utilization of what’s in nature. *Master Lü’s Spring and Autumn Annals* advised “not

to drain a pond to get all its fish” and stated that “man can make fields fertile or futile.” *Huainanzi* tells people “not to kill pregnant animals or disturb hatching fowls.” Both reflected the ancient Chinese idea of ecological balance, sustainable utilization of what nature offers, and opposition to developing and utilizing biological and land resources with extravagance. The “Yueling (Climate and Phenology in a Lunar Month)” chapter of the *Book of Rites* expresses the same idea when it describes the scheduling of agricultural activities for each month. Fourth, ancient China already institutionalized and legalized ecological protection. There were officials in the central government designated for environmental protection from the Qin to the Qing dynasties. Ecological protection laws came into being early. *The Act of Fa Chong Ling*, promulgated in the Western Zhou Dynasty was a decree on environmental resource protection. *Tian Lü (Statutes on Agriculture)* discovered among the wooden and bamboo slips of Warring States period and Qin Dynasty unearthed from Shuihudi, Yunmeng County, Hubei Province in 1975 was the first-ever law on environmental protection. It rigorously banned cutting trees and hunting animals unseasonably and forbade people to block waterways. The *Ernian Lü: Tian Lü (Two-Year Decree: Farmland Decrees)* on the bamboo slips excavated from the early-Han tomb at Mount Zhangjia of Jiangling County, Hubei Province, included laws on protecting forests, animals, and water conservation projects. *Tang Lü Shuyi (Tang Code)*, the peak of China’s legal development, also systematically detailed environmental protection. In the laws of the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, there were also many ecological protection codes. The governments of successive dynasties adopted numerous specific measures in formulating their policies on protecting and managing wildlife, the public environment, land, and water resources.

Chinese civilization not only has its historical significance but also has more practical values. President Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized the profound connection between Chinese civilization and today’s socialism with Chinese characteristics. He points out, “Chinese civilization has a long history stretching back to antiquity; it gave birth to the precious character of the Chinese nation and cultivated the Chinese people’s pursuit of noble values. The pursuit of constant self-improvement and embracing the world through virtue have been the stimuli behind the Chinese nation’s ceaseless self-regeneration, and today this pursuit is still a powerful motivation for us to carry out reform and opening up, and for socialist modernization.” He also states, “Chinese civilization has formed a unique value system over several millennia. The brilliant traditional Chinese culture is the essence of the nation and has deep roots in the Chinese people’s mentality, influencing their way of thinking and behavior unconsciously. Today, we advocate and carry forward the core socialist values through absorbing the rich nourishment of Chinese culture, so as to invigorate its vitality and broaden its influence.” It shows that Chinese civilization has many essential factors spanning time and space. It gave birth to the Chinese nation that lasted for more than 5000 years and has become the rich soil for socialism with Chinese characteristics to take root. It also provides a rich historical reference for building the socialist system and its governing mechanisms with Chinese characteristics. On this basis, Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

for a New Era has innovated China's excellent traditional culture based on what has worked in the past and added a new luster to Chinese civilization.

Chapter 2

Dawn of Civilization



Li Liu

Chinese civilization is an agricultural civilization, and agriculture plays a vital role in the emergence and development of Chinese civilization. Archaeological excavations prove that the Chinese civilization already appeared in several cultural groups in the early Neolithic Age, around 8000 years ago. These areas are often the places where agriculture first appeared. Agriculture and civilization can be traced to the same origin.

2.1 The Origin of Agriculture

Agricultural production brings stable, guaranteed means of living to human beings, which is why most of the human civilizations occurred in the places where agriculture first appeared. The emergence of agriculture brought about the change from the gathering, fishing, and hunting economy to the farming economy, laying the foundation for population growth and formation of village settlements. And stable settlements provide a guarantee for the emergence of civilization. Agricultural development increased surplus products of labor and freed some people so that they could manage public authorities' affairs, laying a material foundation for the formation of civilization. Therefore, the emergence of agriculture was not only a fundamental change in human economic life but also a significant change in the history of human civilization. Since the emergence of agriculture, human beings have embarked on the journey to a civilized society. To describe the origin of Chinese civilization, we must start with the birth of agriculture.

Archaeological discoveries have confirmed that agriculture in China generally originated in two major river basins. One was in the south, centered on the middle

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X. Bu (ed.), *The History of Chinese Civilization*, China Insights,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7125-1_2

and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, represented by rice farming. The other was the dry farming along the Yellow River Basin in the north, characterized by millet and broomcorn millet farming.

The Origin of Rice Farming

In 1993 and 1995, the Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of Hunan Province conducted two excavations at the Yuchanyan site in Daoxian County, Hunan Province, and successively discovered four rice husks that resembled both wild and cultivated rice. The carbon-14 dating has found that they are about 14,000 to 12,000 years old. It is the earliest rice farming site that the archaeological community has seen so far. At the same time, an agricultural archaeological team composed of scholars from China and the United States also discovered wild-rice and cultivated-rice phytoliths in the two sites: Wannian Xianrendong and Diaotonghuan, both in Jiangxi Province. Relics of cultivated rice with explicit attributes dated back to 10,000 years ago were discovered in the Shangshan site of the Pujiang River on the lower reaches of the Yangtze River in Zhejiang Province. In 2011, rice siliceous bodies about 14,000–12,000 years ago were unearthed at the Niulan Cave site in Yingde, Guangdong Province, which may be the source of the rice farming civilization in Lingnan. It shows that China's rice farming was in the embryonic stage over 10,000 years ago in two central places, each with a relatively independent development history (Fig. 2.1).

Around 8000 years ago, agriculture began to brim over its original places, and rice farming started to develop. In 1988, at the Pengtoushan site located in Daping Township, Li County, northern Hunan Province, archaeologists found many traces of rice husks and straws in some baked clods. There was also a lot of broken rice in the inner wall of some pottery. Among the bits, four relatively whole grains looked close to typical *Sinica* rice. In 2001, at the Kuahuqiao site in Xiaoshan, Zhejiang Province,



Fig. 2.1 Rice unearthed at the Yuchanyan site in Daoxian County, Hunan

archaeologists unearthed the remains of thousands of rice grains by rinsing them. They also dug up numerous *si* (spade-shaped farm tools) made of animal shoulder blades. However, gathering and hunting were still the primary food sources at this time, and rice cultivation and livestock breeding were only auxiliary production activities.

Around 7500–7000 years ago, the rice farming culture entered a stage of higher-level development. More than 20,000 grains of original ancient cultivated rice were unearthed at the Bashidang site in Li County, Hunan Province, in addition to over 150 kinds of plant seeds, many animal bones, and agricultural tools such as wooden shovels and *lei* (fork-like implements), and bone shovels. In the archaeological site of the Daxi Culture period around 6000 years ago, rice field remains were also found, along with many rice-grain remains.

The discovery of the Hemudu site, dating back to 7000–6500 years ago, in Yuyao, Zhejiang Province, has attracted worldwide attention. Archaeologists found many remains of stilt houses with a tremendous amount of rice husks and plant leaves in their bottom area. After calculation, the rice husks and leaves were estimated to weigh a few ten thousand *jin* (two *jin* equals one kilogram). Besides, a large number of spade-shaped bone farm tools and stone plows were also unearthed. It shows that agriculture had developed to the plowing stage, and rice farming had advanced considerably. By then, rice farming had eventually replaced gathering and hunting as the main economic activity.

The Origin of Dry Farming

The development of dry farming has experienced a similar development process. The earliest dry farming site found so far is the 10,000-year-old Donghulin site in Mentougou, in the western suburb of Beijing. There, the carbonized millet grains selected with the floatation method are in tiny size, although their shapes have the essential characteristics of cultivated millet. They likely belonged to the transitional type during the evolution from foxtail to cultivated millet. There is also the Nanzhuangtou site in Xushui, Hebei, dating back to about 10,000 years ago. Seemingly domesticated dogs and hogs were unearthed, along with millstones used to process cereal grains. Thus, the origin of dry farming should have been around 10,000 years ago. At this stage, food mainly came from gathering and hunting, and cereal crops were only cultivated in small amounts.

Located in the Haidai area between the Bohai Sea and Mount Tai, it is an important place where cultivation agriculture originated in China. At the Zhangmatun site, located on the outskirts of Jinan City, Shandong Province, archaeologists unearthed 1286 carbonized plant seeds. They include six carbonized broomcorn millet grains and two carbonized millet grains. The upper limit of carbon-14 dating is 9000 years ago. It is the earliest cultivated crop remains found in the Haidai area. More than 450 carbonized plant seeds were excavated at the Yuezhuang site in the same city. They include the remains of three kinds of grains, i.e. broomcorn millet, millet, and rice, showing that the ancient agriculture in the Haidai area began to show signs of mixed water and dry farming around 8000 years ago. The Jiahu site in Wuyang, Henan, also indicates mixed water and dry farming. The site is about 8800–7700 years old and

belongs to the Peiligang Culture, similar to the Pengtoushan Culture in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River. The paddy remains at the Jiahu site were mainly found in pits. The surface and structure of the rice mostly resemble modern *sinica* rice. A small amount looks like *indica* rice. Unearthed were also millet and broomcorn millet, as well as various farm tools: tongue-shaped stone shovels, serrated stone sickles, millstones with papillary stands, and stone grinding rods. The Jiahu people also raised domestic pigs, making the area one of the origins of domestic pigs in China.

In 1976, hundreds of grain cellars were discovered in an 8000-year site in Cishan, Wu'an, Hebei Province, of which 80 cellars still contained grain, which had all become husks. A micro-incineration test showed that they belonged to millet. Recent research has proved that besides millet, they also contain other grains, with millet and broomcorn millet being the majority. These grain husks in the cellars can be converted into hundreds and thousands of kilograms of fresh millet, indicating that cereal crops had become a crucial food source. In addition, well-crafted agricultural tools were also found at the site, such as stone shovels for tilling, stone sickles for harvesting, and millstones and stone grinding rods for processing grains. Moreover, domesticated pigs were also discovered. Almost the same agricultural tools were unearthed at the Peiligang site in Xinzheng, Henan Province, at the same time as Cishan. But the stone shovels and sickles were serrated, proving that they are more advanced than those unearthed in Cishan.

The Dadiwan site is the earliest crop remains found in the upper reaches of the Yellow River. A small amount of carbonized broomcorn millet grains were unearthed in the Dadiwan cultural accumulation during the first stage of excavation. The remains of two kinds of millet were excavated during the second stage at the early Yangshao Culture site. Carbonized broomcorn millet was the majority among the remains. The remains of two kinds of millet were excavated during the fourth stage at the early Yangshao Culture site. But millet was the majority therein. The discovery reveals the development trend of the principal cereal crops of dry farming: it shifted from broomcorn millet to millet.

From 2002 to 2003, archaeologists unearthed carbonized millet and broomcorn millet through floatation at the 7650-year-old Xinglonggou site in Inner Mongolia, with 1400 grains in total. Research showed that the millet was being cultivated from wild plants, indicating that millet and broomcorn millet had been grown in the upper reaches of the West Liao River then.

The Banpo site in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, is representative of Yangshao Culture, dating from 7000 to 5000 years ago. In the 1950s, archaeologists found millet reduced to husks only in cellars and pots. If converted into fresh millet, the husks found in one of the cellars alone weigh hundreds of kilograms. The unearthed farm tools include stone hoes and shovels for tilling, stone knives for harvesting, and millstones and stone rods for grinding grains. Animal remains of domestic pigs and dogs were also found, which shows that agriculture was relatively developed at this time. Northern China, represented by the Yangshao Culture, had officially entered a stage of social development where agricultural production being the leading economy.

Livestock raising was closely related to the origin of the agricultural economy. Judging from the current archaeological findings, the first domesticated animals were pigs and dogs. Later, yellow cattle, buffaloes, goats, sheep, chickens, and other animals were domesticated successively. The domestication of the so-called “six animals,” except for horses, was roughly completed in the middle of the Neolithic Age, reflecting the development of agriculture.

The origin of Chinese agriculture has been a long evolutionary process. Around 10,000 years ago, ancient ancestors living in northern and southern China began cultivating certain plants almost simultaneously.

People in the north grew millet and broomcorn millet, whereas people in the south grew rice. The Yangtze River and Yellow River basins became two of the centers where agriculture originated worldwide. The period around 8000 years ago was a crucial stage in the formation of ancient Chinese agriculture. Archaeological evidence of genuine early agricultural production has been found in North and South China. Examples are the remains of plants characteristic of cultivated cereal crops, prototype farming tools, and animals already showing the characteristics of domestication. Two agricultural systems were formed in North and South China 6000 or 7000 years ago: millet and broomcorn millet as the main cereal crops in the north and rice as the main cereal crops in the south. The two agricultural systems were closely linked and complemented each other. Together, they gave birth to civilization in the East with rice and millet as agrarian features.

2.2 Unity in Diversity

The origin and development of agriculture have promoted the progress of productivity and pushed primitive civilization into a new stage. Around 5000 or 6000 years ago, cultures mushroomed in various regions of China as densely as the stars in the sky. Exchanges between regions were intensive and in-depth. About 4000 years ago, the civilization on the Central Plains rose, forming a pattern resembling a flower with two layers of petals. This pattern of regional cultures surrounding the Central Plains civilization presented a model of unity in diversity.

The Xinglongwa Culture, located in the West Liao River Basin and the north and south areas of the Yan Mountains, is about 8200–7500 years old. Archaeologists discovered a site with a total area of 35,000 m². It includes circular trenches, tombs, ash pits, and rows of houses, and the largest house site is about 140 m². Also unearthed at the site were polished jade articles, penannular jade rings, stone axes, dagger-shaped jade pendants, bone flutes, and skirts of clam shells.

Dadiwan is located in Shaodian Village, Wangying Township, Qin'an County, Gansu. It is a prehistoric site dating back 8000 to 4800 years. Here, archaeologists discovered many house sites, ash pits, kiln sites, and tombs from the early and middle Neolithic times, as well as a large number of production tools, household utensils, weapons, and ornaments. More than a dozen painted and engraved symbols were found on the.

pottery unearthed in the first phase of the Dadiwan excavation, which was more than 1000 years earlier than the inscription on the pottery of Banpo in Xi'an.

At the Kuahuqiao Cultural site in Zhejiang on the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, archaeologists have discovered a large amount of earthenware, bone ware, wood ware, stoneware, and other cultural relics. They also excavated canoes and related relics dating back about 8000 years. The eight sets of symbols inscribed on the antlers and wooden arithmetic chips were presumed to be the digital hexagram symbols recording the original form of divination. In 2013, at the 8300–7800-year-old Jingtoushan site, also located in Zhejiang, archaeologists discovered a wide variety of wooden tools, exquisite woven fabrics, and piles of shells belonging to blood cockles, conches, oysters, razor clams, and Asian hard clam shells, as well as a large number of marine fish backbones, teeth, and otoliths. It is the deepest-buried and oldest coastal shell mound site on the Chinese coast, providing abundant evidence for early marine development and utilization in China.

The Gaomiao Culture, about 7000–7800 years old, is located southwest of Dongting Lake in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River. At the Gaomiao site, archaeologists discovered a sizeable sacrificial field with an area of about 1000 m², dozens of sacrificial pits, and remains of auxiliary houses. Also found were exquisite white pottery sacrificial utensils stamped with complex patterns: ladder-like stone carvings erected in front of a shrine, solar patterns, octagonal star patterns, bird designs, and masks of beasts with terrifying long teeth. They indicate the early-maturing religious concept.

About 8000–6000 years ago, the settlements of the late Peiligang Culture in the Central Plains also began to show a certain degree of social differentiation. The sizes of tombs noticeably showed the difference between the rich and the poor. Buried in the graves of larger sizes were unique artifacts of turtle shells, bone dividers, and bone flutes. Some turtle shells or bone dividers were also engraved with symbols similar to text.

What was mentioned above shows the early stages of Chinese cultural development. From 6000 to 4500 years ago, societies became increasingly complex in various cultural areas in China. The rapid growth was manifested by the emergence of central or high-standard,

large-scale settlements with defensive facilities, functioning as religious and economic centers. They served as the central areas within their specific local cultural zones with a distinct divide between the rich and the poor and expanded and solidified scopes of cultural exchange. The early forms of states appeared. The more significant archaeological cultures in this period include the Yangshao Culture, the Hongshan Culture, the Dawenkou Culture, the Shijiahe Culture, and the Liangzhu Culture.

About 6000 years ago, the Yangshao Culture emerged on the Central Plains. The most significant Yangshao Culture site is the Shuanghuaishu site at the intersection of the Yellow River and the Yiluo River that runs through Gongyi, Henan Province. The site arose in the late Miaodigou type of Yangshao Culture around 5300 years ago and continued to the late Yangshao period, covering an area of 1.17 million square meters. It consists of a large-scale central residential area with a closed and rowed layout, a large-scale rammed-earth foundation, and a large-scale rammed-earth site built by the

banzhu (placing rammed earth between planks) method. There are also three large-scale public cemeteries with more than 1700 strictly planned burial grounds, remains of three rammed-earth sacrificial platforms, and large-scale tombs surrounding the central rammed-earth sacrificial platform. A Big Dipper astronomical design of nine earthen pots was also discovered at the site. In addition, over 20 ritual relics of human or animal sacrifice, as well as road systems and areas of pottery workshops and water storage, were unearthed at the same time. With numerous rich cultural relics from the Yangshao Culture period, this site was dubbed by researchers the “embryo of early Chinese civilization” and the “Ancient State of the Luo and Yellow Rivers.”

In North China, the Niuheliang site in Lingyuan City, Liaoning Province, is the center of the Hongshan Culture. It contains a large-size goddess temple, high-grade stone tombs, large-size altars, and numerous jade ware. The site is featured with large size and high grade. Analytical data from the excavation results show at least six levels of social stratification and four levels of social organization in Hongshan civilization, which should be a relatively complex hierarchical society (Fig. 2.2).

The Dawenkou Culture is mainly distributed in the lower reaches of the Yellow River. It is named after the 6500–4500-year-old Dawenkou site at Tai'an, Shandong. The graves show a sharp divide between the haves and have-nots within the same cluster. A few large-size tombs each contains over a hundred artifacts, many of which are finely crafted jade ware, earthenware, and tusk ware. Most of the graves are only big enough to inter the dead, with no or extremely simple artifacts buried with them, demonstrating the sharp divide in wealth and social status.

The 5000–4300-year-old Liangzhu Culture is located in the Taihu Lake area. Representative relics include the “palace zone” on Mojiao Hill, the “royal mausoleum” area on Mount Fan, and the “aristocrats’ cemetery” on Mount Jiangjia in the city of Liangzhu. There is also the high dam system represented by Tiger Ridge and the low dam system represented by Liyu Mountain in the northwest periphery outside the city. Together, they form an immense water conservancy system consisting of 11 dams. Besides, the vicinity of the remains of Liangzhu City also boasts the Yaoshan Altar and the Huiguanshan Cemetery and the Mount Yujia site cluster. There are also important sites such as the Fuquan Mountain in Qingpu, Shanghai, and the Wujin Temple in Jiangsu Province. They show the high-level development of Liangzhu culture.

The Shijiahe Culture in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River is about 4500 to 4000 years old. The largest site is Shijiahe City, with an area of about 1.2 million square meters. There are also six small cities in the surrounding area, forming a hierarchical pyramid-like social structure. The jade ware and earthenware of the Shijiahe Culture have distinctive artistic features, indicating that a specialized handicraft industry had possibly emerged. There are stark differences among the tombs: Big ones are magnificently rich, while small ones have nothing buried with the dead. Forty-one carved symbols of the early period of the Shijiahe Culture have been discovered at the Xiaojiawuji site.

From about 4500 years ago, social development entered a new stage: the rise of the Central Plains. It led to a more mature civilization that witnessed an era of numerous states emerging on the Central Plains, with numerous warlords each grabbing a piece



Fig. 2.2 Ruins of the goddess temple at Niuheliang

of the territory. A new social order gradually took shape in the fierce conflicts among the warlords and radiated its cultural influence to the surrounding regions. The most famous culture sites at this stage are the Shimao site in Shenmu County, Shaanxi Province; the Taosi site in Xiangfen County, Shanxi Province; and the Shizhuang site in Huaiyang City, Henan Province.

The ancient city site of Shimao at Shenmu in Shaanxi covers an area of about 4.25 million square meters. It consists of three basically complete and relatively independent city sites: the Huangcheng terrace, the inner city, and the outer city. The Huangcheng terrace is at the center of the city site, home to a residential area for nobles, the foundation of a royal palace, and sites of ceremonial and sacrificial buildings. A large amount of jade ware, stone carvings, jaw harps, painted murals,

and eagle-shaped potteries have been excavated at the site. Also discovered are many sacrificed human remains and slaughtered prisoners of war. The Shimao site was an extra-large central settlement. Together with other small and medium-sized settlements around it, it constituted a four-level settlement structure, which became the center of the regional political system in North China at that time.

The ancient site of Taosi Temple in Xiangfen, Shanxi, covers an area of 2.8 million square meters. It consists of three walls forming the palace city, the inner city, and the outer city. It comprises various functional zones: palace, noble residence, commons' residence, storage, handicraft workshops, large-scale astronomical buildings, and sacrificial ceremonies. Excavated are a large amount of jade ware, painted pottery, lacquerware, bronze gears, bronze bells, bronze rings, as well as crocodile-skin drums, stone drums, earthen drums, and plates with dragon designs—artifacts apparently representing different social strata. Discovered is also the earliest astronomical observatory of ancient times. The tombs show a clear class division. The weapons such as stone dagger-axes, stone arrowheads, and stone battle-axes excavated signify that a hierarchical power system had been formed, and the social gap between the rich and the poor had widened. They indicate that a relatively complete social administration system or state management agencies had taken shape.

The Shizhuang site at Huaiyang City, Henan Province, covers an area of about 100,000 m². A 5600-m² artificial rammed-earth platform lies in the south, with 30-m-wide shallow ditches enclosing it. Surround it on the east and west are also rammed-earth walls. In the area of 2850 m² already excavated, the remains of 29 storage buildings have been discovered. They have mud plasters applied on the exterior walls, and their bottom is also plastered with a water-resistant layer of coarse-grained clay and a water-proof layer of fine-grained clay. Through testing, archaeologists have also discovered millet and broomcorn millet from the bottom of the storage remains, as well as the phytoliths of *Arundo donax* (a kind of reed) and cogongrass used for building the granaries. As experts believe this is the only grain storage settlement seen in the Longshan era, it is of great significance. It has a "Longshan value" comparable to the Shimao City Wall and the Taosi Cemetery. It is the key to exploring the Erlitou Culture which is believed had nurtured China's earliest dynasty.

Around 4000 years ago, the Erlitou Culture, which is assumed to be the Xia culture, rose and became the core and leader of the general process of Chinese civilization. At this point, the cultural pattern of the Chinese civilization—unity in diversity—had been formed.

What has been discussed above shows that Chinese civilization developed and finally formed an organic whole within the geographical scope of the Yellow River, the Yangtze River, and the West Liao River basins. In their initial and early development stages, the cultures of various regions showed differences in their environmental basis, economic contents, and religious and social consciousness, thus demonstrating a pattern of diversity. However, while competing with one another and developing independently, these cultures learned from each other through exchanges and became all-embracing. For example, the Liangzhu Culture in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River not only drew on the Lingjiatan Culture in the Jianghuai region but also had exchanges with the Hongshan Culture in the West Liao River Basin and the Dawenkou

Culture in the lower reaches of the Yellow River. The Shima Culture has elements from the Tiger Mountain Culture in North China as well as the Taosi Culture in southern Shanxi and the Liangzhu Culture in Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces. The Taosi Culture in South Shanxi comprises many other advanced civilization factors of surrounding cultures: the Qijia Culture in the Gansu-Qinghai region, the Xiaohayuan Culture in Northeast China, the Liangzhu Culture in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, the Dawenkou-Longshan Culture in the lower reaches of the Yellow River, and the Shijiahe Culture in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River. The significant discoveries of the sacrificial pit at the Sanxingdui site also indicate that the ancient Shu civilization had many elements of the Central Plains' Shang-dynasty bronze civilization. The various cultures gradually showed a trend of integration as they continuously mingled with each other. Eventually, the Central Plains saw the formation of an all-embracing core, which we call the "unity in diversity of the Chinese civilization." "Unity in diversity" laid the foundation for the "Three-dynasty Civilization" of the Xia, Shang, and Western Zhou dynasties and became the source of the multi-ethnic Chinese nation, kicking off the thousands of years of the progress of the Chinese civilization without interruption.

2.3 Legends of Ancient History

An expert from the Poly Art Museum in Beijing chanced to find the *Suigongxu* bronze vessel on a foreign art market in the spring of 2002. The artifact measures 11.8 cm in height and 24.8 cm in diameter at its opening, and its original lid is missing. There are 98 characters in ten lines of text inscribed on the inside bottom of the vessel. The inscriptions document the feast of Great Yu controlling the great flood, which corresponds to the records found in *The Book of Documents: Contribution of Yu* and *The Book of Songs*. The *Suigongxu* inscriptions are the earliest known relic example of the legend. Scholars had believed that the story of Great Yu controlling the deluge was fabricated by someone from the Warring States period. The discovery of *Suigongxu* shows that people had widely praised Great Yu's feast as early as the Western Zhou Dynasty (Fig. 2.3).

Ancient Chinese documents have preserved a trove of legends regarding ancient Chinese history. The myths range from *Pangu Creating the World* and *Nüwa Creating Humans* to the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors. There are various versions, with a mixture of truth and fake accounts. However, they provide information on the civilization's origins and the Chinese ancestors' understanding of the origins.

Pangu Creating the World and Nüwa Creating Humans

Pangu Creating the World and *Nüwa Creating Humans* are the legends told by Chinese ancestors about the origin of mankind. Pangu's story was first recorded in *Sanwu Liji (Historical Records of the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors)* by Xu Zheng in the Three Kingdoms period. According to the legend, the universe had been as chaotic as an egg in which Pangu was born. He lived in it for 18,000 years until



Fig. 2.3 Suigongxu bronze vessel and inscription

one day, he opened it and let the light, limpid stuff rise as the sky and the heavy, murky material fall as the earth, with him standing in between, his head touching the sky and his feet the ground. The sky and the earth each grew 3.33 m thicker daily, and their distance became far away after another 18,000 years. Both the sky and the earth were extremely thick, and Pangu exceedingly tall. Later accounts tell that Pangu was exhausted after separating the sky from the earth and collapsed. His body transformed into the features of the globe after his death.

Nüwa is best known for creating human beings. She was the ancient Chinese goddess and is said to have created everything in the world. Legend has it that there were no people when the world was first created. Nüwa made them with mud. The myth of Nüwa's creation of human beings may reflect the phenomenon that women occupied the dominant role in population multiplication in a matrilineal society. Another version of her legend tells of Nüwa and her brother Fuxi, both having human heads but snake bodies. They got married and multiplied the human beings. There are images of the sister and brother copulating with their snake tails on Han-dynasty stone or brick reliefs, showing that Fuxi and Nüwa are believed to be the god and goddess of human creation, life, and birth.

Legend of the Three Sovereigns

There are different accounts of the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors in the literature. At least six versions of the Three Sovereigns have been handed down: 1) Tianhuang (the Celestial Emperor), Dihuang (the Terrestrial Emperor), and Taihuang (the Grand Emperor); 2) Tianhuang, Dihuang, and Renhuang (the Human Emperor); 3) Fuxi, Nüwa, and Shennong (the Divine Farmer); 4) Fuxi, Shennong, and Zhurong (the God of Fire); 5) Fuxi, Shennong, and Gonggong (the God of Water); and 6) Suiren (the Flint Man), Fuxi, and Shennong. Despite their differences, the various legends of the Three Sovereigns reveal some features of early Chinese society.

Han Feizi, a book by the eponymous philosopher Han Fei (c. 280–233 BC), tells the story of Youchao and Suiren. According to Han Fei, there were more wild beasts than humans in remote antiquity. Youchao helped the people build wood houses to

protect themselves from beasts of prey and venomous creatures and insects. Suiren, who knew how to make fire by drilling wood, taught people to eat cooked meat and kept people from getting sickened by eating raw or rotten plants and meats. The two legends must have described a transition in human lifestyle from living in caves to living in shelters and from eating uncooked games to consuming prepared food.

Book of Changes: Appended Statements II has a record of Fuxi and Shennong. Fuxi, also called Paoxi, is credited with the knowledge of astronomy and geography. He created *Bagua* based on birds' and animals' movements and the changes in *yin* and *yang* in the universe. He used *Bagua* to gauge the gods' virtues and classify all things in the world. Besides, he used ropes to make nets and taught people to fish and farm, which must have indicated a fishing and hunting economy. The invention of *Bagua* showed the birth of naïve logic and dialectic thinking. Shennong came after Fuxi and was said to have made *si* (spade-shaped farm tools) and *lei* (fork-like farm tools) and taught people to farm. *Si* and *lei* appeared in the Neolithic Age, about 7000–8000 years ago. So, the legend of Shennong must have reflected the time when agriculture originated in the Neolithic period.

Legend of the Five Emperors

There are five versions of the Five Emperors: (1) Huangdi (Yellow Emperor), Zhuanxu, Emperor Ku, Emperor Yao, and Emperor Shun; (2) Fuxi, Shennong, Huangdi, Emperor Yao, and Emperor Shun; (3) Taihao, Yandi, Huangdi, Shaohao, Zhuanxu; and 4) Shaohao, Zhuanxu, Emperor Ku, Emperor Yao, and Emperor Shun. The *Records of the Grand Historian* adopted the first version, making it more influential.

Huangdi and Yandi were the two most prominent figures in the legendary era and are regarded as the Chinese nation's ancestors. According to literature, Huangdi and Yandi were the sons of the Shaodian and Youjiao, respectively. Growing up by the Jishui River, Huangdi adopted the last name Ji; Yandi grew up by the Jiangshui River, so he had the last name, Jiang. As Yandi became immoral, Huangdi rose and gradually won the submission of other tribes. He then "cultivated his people's moral character and boosted the soldiers' morale" and led all the tribes in the decisive and triumphant battle at Banquan, where he defeated Yandi.

Then, Yandi and Huangdi became allies. The Battle of Banquan began the integration of the two leaders' clans. Afterward, Huangdi ganged up with Yandi and other tribes to battle the revolting Chiyou.¹ After capturing and killing Chiyou in the Battle of Zhuolu, Huangdi was regarded as the alliance's leader under the heaven. The Central Plains was unified, and social stability ensued. The largest and

¹ *Warring States Bamboo Slips in Tsinghua University's Collection* (11) records the legend of Huangdi and Chiyou. The two were father and son: "Huangdi has a son named Chiyou, who learned to use all kinds of weapons as he grew up." There is a similar record in the *Records of the Grand Historian: Table of the Marquises Ennobled Since the Jianyuan Period*: Tian Qianqiu submitted a memorial to the Wu Emperor of Han Dynasty, saying, "If a son misuses his father's army, the punishment is nothing more than flogging. This kind of rife between father and son has existed since ancient times, such as Huangdi and Chiyou. When they had a row, Huangdi crossed the Yellow River and killed him, (which was too severe a punishment to be emulated)."

earliest Chinese tribe bloc—the Huaxia nationality—came into being. Documents have recorded the many unparalleled achievements of Huangdi. As summarized in *Chinese History: Pre-Qin Volume*, in the era of Huangdi, tremendous achievements were made in developing Chinese prehistoric society. Cattle and horses were domesticated and used, vehicles and boats were invented, and the Chinese learned to dig wells, raise silkworms, reel silk, and use copper weapons in wars. All these show that the Chinese material civilization progressed by leaps and bounds. Meanwhile, writing was invented; the calendar of the heavenly stems and earthly branches were created; and art, music, and dance flourished. These were the achievements of spiritual civilization. The invention of official hats and clothes had dual significance for both material and spiritual civilization. Most importantly, the era of Huangdi gave rise to the Chinese nation's institutional civilization. The documentary records of Huangdi show that his era corresponded to the late Neolithic Age in archaeological terms, and this age was roughly in the middle and late Yangshao Culture period.

Among the many sub-clans of the Huangdi family, Zhuanxu and Ku were the two most famous early branches. Zhuanxu was also known as Gaoyang, and Ku as Gaoxin. Legend has it that they each had “eight talents,” referred to as Bayuan (“Eight People of Goodness”) and Bakai (“Eight People of Joy”). Closely following them were the three generations of kings of integrity, namely Yao, Shun, and Yu. Yao's given name was Fangxun, and his clan name was Taotang. The people supported Yao because of his benevolent governance. At the recommendation of the “Four Yue's,” allegedly great-grandsons of Gonggong, Yao decided to abdicate the throne to Shun when he was old. Shun had the given name Youyu. According to the *Records of the Grand Historian*, he was from Jizhou and good at farming, fishing, hunting, and fictile craft. Shun was dutiful to the elderly and affectionate to all, so “good virtues in under the heaven started from Shun.” A devastating flood hit China during Shun's time. Yu managed to control it by dredging a channel. Therefore, the senile Shun gave up his throne to Yu.

How to treat the rich ancient historical legends and materials handed down from ancient China has always been an issue that scholars have been debating. Many deny their authenticity, believing that they are fabricated by later generations. However, many scholars have dedicated themselves to demonstrating their authenticity with archaeological results. Scholars have achieved good results in exploring the origin of Chinese civilization in recent years thanks to the collaboration between documentary history and historical archaeology and the researchers' effort to link up the two disciplines scientifically. More effective involvement of archaeology in exploring the ancient history of the legendary age takes perseverance and hard work.

Chapter 3

The Xia-Shang-Zhou Civilization



Li Liu

Xia (c. 2070 BC–c. 1600 BC) was the first dynasty in recorded Chinese history. Shang (c. 1600 BC–c. 1046 BC) was a dynasty to replace the Xia after its fall. It is a dynasty whose existence is documented in historical records and confirmed by archaeological excavations. Zhou (c. 1046 BC–256 BC) was divided into the Western Zhou (c. 1046 BC–771 BC) and the Eastern Zhou (c. 770 BC–256 BC) dynasties. The Western Zhou Dynasty refers to the 280 years between the founding of the Zhou Dynasty to the killing of King You of Zhou. The Eastern Zhou was the period from the Western Zhou's fall and King Ping of Zhou's eastward relocation to Luoyi (present-day Luoyang, Henan Province) to its destruction by the Qin Dynasty.

The Xia-Shang-Zhou civilization is referred to as the “Three-dynasty Civilization.” Erlitou and Yinxu (Yin Ruins), the political centers of the Xia and Shang dynasties, are important material manifestations of civilization. The enfeoffment system and the patriarchal clan system were the essential parts of Western Zhou's ritual and music system, laying the foundation for traditional Chinese culture. The idea of the “Mandate of Heaven,” “matching Heaven with virtue,” and “introducing virtues into rites” placed the political and cultural life of the entire society under the framework of the ritual and music system. It had far-reaching implications for the origin of Confucianism. The rites collapsed and the music was corrupted during the Eastern Zhou era, and heads of various states fought for hegemony. The states introduced institutional reforms to stay powerful while “a hundred schools of thought contend as if a hundred flowers vied for blooming.” It was a significant era in which radical changes were taking place, from the mode of production to the political system, from intellectual culture to ideology.

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X. Bu (ed.), *The History of Chinese Civilization*, China Insights,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7125-1_3

3.1 Erlitou and Yinxu

The Erlitou Site

In 1959, Mr. Xu Xusheng, a famous Chinese archaeologist, led a team to Dengfeng, Yu County, and other places in western Henan Province to engage in an archaeological investigation of “Xia Ruins.” The discovery of the Erlitou site lifted the curtain on exploring the Xia culture.

Located in Zhaizhen Township, Yanshi City, Henan Province, Erlitou is the most important site of the Erlitou Culture. The site extends 2.4 km west and east and 1.9 km south and north. It can be divided into the palace and temple area, the sacrificial and burial area, the handicraft workshop area, the noble families’ residential area, and the commons’ residential area. In recent years, archaeologists have conducted carbon-14 dating of the Erlitou site and concluded that the main body of the site should be the remains of the late Xia Dynasty. The last (fourth) excavated remains belonged to the early Shang Dynasty.

The Erlitou Culture can be divided into four phases. Due to the severe damage to the accumulation of the first phase by the later remains, few relics of the first phase were unearthed except for some white potteries, ivory artifacts, turquoise products, and bronze tools. In the second phase, a grid network of roads appeared, with large-size buildings flanking it. The palace area also emerged with the No. 3 and No. 5 foundations completed in the northeast. Workshops of bronze and turquoise work are found south of the palace. The construction of rammed-earth walls encircling the palace began in the third phase. The No. 1 foundation site of the largest single palace building in the capital appeared in the southern part of the Palace District, the No. 7, 8, and 9 foundation sites in the southwest also presented themselves in this period, and the No. 4 foundation site also emerged in the northeast earlier in this period. No. 2 foundation site came into being at a later time. A road was built in the palace city to connect to the grid network of roads outside. The level of handicraft production in the workshop area reached a new height during this period. The grid road network, the palace city walls, and the foundations were still in use during the fourth phase, but they might be abandoned toward the end of this phase.

The difference between the remains of the tombs is stark. Many burial objects were unearthed from high-grade graves, including bronzeware, ade ware, and turquoise ornaments. M3 yielded a dragon-shaped artifact of over 2000 turquoise plates among those burial sites. It was reputed as the “First Dragon of China.” Besides the large tombs in the palace area, other graves are mid-and small-sized, revealing the apparent social divide.

The Erlitou site was large in scale and neat in layout. It was the most expansive urban settlement in China and even in East Asia at that time. Judging from the excavation results, the four phases should have belonged to the same archaeological culture that had developed continuously and independently. However, no script was discovered from the Erlitou relics. Therefore, further archaeological research has to be done to decide whether the Erlitou site was the center of the Xia Dynasty as described in historical literature.

Around 2000 BC, dramatic and turbulent social changes took place. The splendid regional cultures declined successively, and an all-embracing core appeared in the Central Plains. It was the Erlitou Culture typically represented by the Erlitou site. It borrowed the elements from the cultures of various places in an extremely short time and quickly rose to become the center of Chinese civilization. At this point, the cultural pattern of the Chinese civilization—unity in diversity—had been formed. The Erlitou Culture, together with the later Shang and Zhou cultures, constituted the mainstream of the Chinese civilization.

Yin Xu

Located in today's Anyang City, Henan Province, Yinxu (Yin Ruins) is the site of the capital of the late Shang Dynasty. It is a capital confirmed by historical literature and archaeological discoveries. From Pan Geng's relocation to Yin to the demise of the Shang Dynasty in the hands of Di Xin, the King Zhou of Shang, Yin witnessed the rule of 12 kings of eight generations over 273 years. Yinxu was the political, economic, cultural, and military center of China's Shang Dynasty.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Yinxu became world-famous for the oracle bone inscriptions unearthed there. Archaeologists found a wealth of late Shang remains to confirm the authenticity of the historical records on the late Shang capital.

Neatly laid out on the north and south of the Huan (Anyang) River, Yinxu extends 6 km from east to west and 5 km from north to south, with a total area of 30 km². However, the latest archaeological excavation data reveal a total area of at least 36 km². The existing relics include the palace and ancestral temple site, the royal mausoleum site, the Hougang site, the shopping center north of the Huan River, the settlement site, the oracle bone cellar, and handicraft workshops.

The ruins of the palace and ancestral temple are located in the area centered on Xiaotun and Huayuanzhuang villages, extending about 1100 m from north to south and 650 m from east to west, with a total area of about 0.7 km², containing more than 80 building sites such as palaces and ancestral temples. The building sites from northeast to southwest fall into the A, B, and C clusters. An artificial ditch surrounds the palace and ancestral temple on the west and south sides. Most experts believe it is for defensive purposes, playing a role in protecting the palace, the ancestral temple, and the surrounding residences of the nobles. The discovery of many sacrificial pits here indicates that some buildings might be ancestral temples. Numerous ditches and square pools were also found in the palace and ancestral temple area, possibly related to the drainage system. The most famous site in the palace-ancestral temple area is the Tomb of Fuhao, wife of Wuding, King of the Shang Dynasty. It is the only discovered Shang Dynasty royal family member's tomb that can be linked to oracle bone inscriptions to determine the age and identity of the tomb's owner. Unearthed from the grave were 16 sacrificed people and 1928 artifacts, of which 468 were bronze ware, 755 jade ware, 564 bone artifacts, and nearly 7000 seashells.

The site of the royal mausoleum is located on a hillock called Xibeigang in the north of Houjia Village and Wuguan Village, north of the Huan River. It is about 450 m long from east to west and 250 m wide from north to south, with a total area of 0.11 km². Since 1934, 13 large tombs with tomb passages and over 2000

accompanying graves, sacrificial pits, and chariot pits have been discovered here. Also excavated are numerous exquisitely crafted bronzeware, jade ware, stoneware, and pottery. The academic circles recognize it as the location of the royal tombs of the Shang Dynasty. The distribution pattern, burial system, and the way funerary objects were interred in Yixu's royal tombs epitomize the class status, hierarchy, kinship, and social organizations in the late Shang Dynasty. Over 2500 sacrificial pits, arranged in an orderly manner, have been found east of the royal cemetery. With people and animal skeletons in them, the pits should be a public sacrificial venue for the royal family to worship their ancestors. They show the rite system with hierarchy as the core during the Shang Dynasty.

In 1999, a large-scale Shang Dynasty city site was discovered in the northeast of the Yinxu site, named Huanbei (North of Huan River) Shang City. The city site is roughly square, with a width of 2.15 km from east to west and a length of 2.2 km from north to south, covering a total area of about 4.7 km². There are rammed city wall foundation grooves around the city. The palace city is located in the south of the large city, and most of the palace area lies slightly to the north of the palace city. Investigation has found over 30 large rammed-earth foundation sites. The city site was a bit earlier than that of Yinxu, the dynasty's capital, before its fall. Some scholars argue that Huanbei Shang City might be the first location for Yinxu when Pan Geng relocated the Shang's capital, and he reconstructed it south of the Huan River after it was burned down in a fire (Fig. 3.1).



Fig. 3.1 Plan of Yinxu and the Huanbei Shang City site

Yinxu's excavation is the product of combining traditional Chinese epigraphy and Western field archaeology, and symbolizes, among others, the rise of modern Chinese archaeology. It establishes a credible chronological basis for archeological investigation of the Shang and Zhou dynasties and provides solid and reliable data for the history and culture of the late Shang Dynasty.

3.2 Creating Rites and Music

Duke Wen of Zhou's creation of rites and music has become a favorite topic for later generations. In fact, it was a comprehensive process of cultural system construction. It produced a set of institutions, systems, and rituals to govern the world under heaven with policies and legal procedures by a few generations of the Zhou rulers. They based their actions on the lessons they conscientiously learned from the fall of the Shang Dynasty, the original systems and traditions of the Zhou people, and the cultural achievements of the previous generations. The content of the Zhou's decrees, regulations, and institutions was so rich that it covered politics, economy, military affairs, religion, marriage, family, ethics, and moral principles. It also included rituals regarding sacrifices, mourning, guest reception, military actions, and celebrations. But among these, the political system served as the core, with its enfeoffment and patriarchal clan systems having the most significant impact on posterity.

The Enfeoffment System

One day, King Cheng of Zhou played with his younger brother Shu Yu. The king cut a parasol tree leaf into the shape of a *gui* (elongated jade tablet held by ancient rulers) and presented it to his brother, playfully saying, "Let this be proof that I will make you a feudal lord." The court's grand historian asked the king to pick an auspicious day to make Shu Yu the lord. King Cheng said it was only a joke. The historian responded, "The son of heaven can't joke around lightly." Therefore, Shu Yu became the lord with the title of Shu Yu of Tang. This anecdote documented in the *Records of the Grand Historian: The Jin Aristocratic Family* might not be accurate, but it conveyed to us some information about the enfeoffment of the Western Zhou Dynasty.

Enfeoffment mainly refers to a political method in which a Son of Heaven gave a prince or someone a fief, making him a vassal. It was a new way of ruling over an unprecedentedly vast conquered territory. The enfeoffed vassal state was an artificially organized community with the dual nature of a state and a local organization. The enfeoffment system was an essential political system established by the Zhou people to consolidate their political power.¹

¹ Some scholars may argue that the enfeoffment system had existed from the era of Wu Ding, a king of the Shang Dynasty who ruled China around 1200 BC. However, some dukes and princes in the regions outside the royal domain had their own land and people in their clan-states or regional states. They had not gone through the enfeoffing process to obtain their land and people. They

Most of the enfeoffed Zhou people were the royal relatives with the same last name as the kings of Zhou. And some were officials of merit with different last names and descendants of ancient royal families. It is recorded that the Zhou Dynasty “established 71 vassals, of which 53 shared the same last name with the Zhou royal family.” Learning from the lesson of Shang’s demise, the Western Zhou rulers hoped to use their feudal relatives to defend the rule of the Zhou Dynasty. The main content of enfeoffment was to take someone into vassalage by giving him a fief and people therein. The enfeoffed might also receive some sacrificial vessels, chariots, banners with bells, bows with arrows, leathered drums, jade ware, people from the former dynasty, and some officials. The enfeoffed feudal lords must obey the king of the Zhou and fulfill the duties of defending the king’s territory, paying tributes and taxes, having an audience with the sovereign, and reporting on their work to him. They must also fight with the king of Zhou if necessary. The enfeoffed feudal lords could enfeoff their senior officials, who could, in turn, grant their land and people to the *shi* (people whose social status was between senior officials and the commons). As a result, a hierarchical political pyramid was formed across the country.

The enfeoffment system significantly ensured the local loyalty to the central dynasty and played a considerable role in maintaining the stability of the dynasty’s early rule. On the one hand, the enfeoffed feudal lords enjoyed a close relationship and shared weal and woe with the Zhou royal family. Bound by common interests, they defended each other, ensuring the extension of the Zhou Dynasty’s rule. On the other hand, the enfeoffed feudal lords must immerse themselves with the local people, keeping a close relationship with the indigenous people to stabilize their rule. The most significant political effect of this new political system was the tremendous progress the Zhou people made in the form of the state. A new political pattern thus took shape in the Western Zhou Dynasty.

More importantly, the vassals integrated people of different blood ties into a single community to enable the otherwise unrelated ethnic peoples to share political and economic benefits. It was conducive to breaking through the blood-tie barrier among different ethnic groups, thus forming a new political and geographical relationship on this basis. The emergence of the vassal states was the intermediate link in the transition from a multi-state political pattern to the political structure of a centralized state.

The Patriarchal Clan System

King You of Zhou had a concubine named Bao Si. She was fabulously beautiful but seldom smiled. To see her face beaming, King You ordered the soldiers to light the beacon several times to tease the feudal lords because lit beacons were used to rally when the capital was in danger of being besieged by an invading enemy. Tired of the teasing, the feudal lords refused to come anymore. King You exiled his legal wife Queen Shen and her son to please Bao Si further and designated Bao Si’s son, Bo Fu, as the heir apparent. His move triggered a revolt by the feudal lords and the invasion

became what they were due to King Zhou of Shang’s military conquest, which was different from creating vassals through enfeoffment procedures during the Zhou Dynasty.

of ethnic peoples outside the Zhou Dynasty's territory. Despite lit beacons, the loyal feudal lords thought King You was crying wolf. Consequently, both the king and Bo Fu were killed, which brought Western Zhou to its downfall. The legend of King You teasing the feudal lords by sending false signals may not be a matter of fact. However, it is undeniable that King You's severe violation of the patriarchal clan system by deposing the crown prince caused significant political turmoil that led to the demise of the Western Zhou Dynasty.

The patriarchal clan system refers to a blood identification system based on the succession of the throne by the monarch's legal wife's first son. Its main content included the power, responsibility, and interrelationship between the royal family's children, the clan, and the clan's people. Its purpose was to unite the clan and continue its bloodline. The system involved relationships between close and distant relatives, children born by the legal wife and concubines, and various social strata. The patriarchal clan system was the essential social system during the Western and Eastern Zhou eras. It not only acted on the clan but also had a necessary impact on maintaining the aristocratic rule during the Western and Eastern Zhou dynasties and ensuring the regular operation of the state.

Some scholars believe the Zhou Dynasty initiated the patriarchal clan system but deny the Shang Dynasty the credit. However, the oracle bone script unearthed from Yinxu shows that the Shang Dynasty had relatively explicit norms and sequences regarding the selection and appellation of the sacrifice objects and the implementation of related rituals and ceremonies, indicating the maturity and completeness of the ancestral temple sacrifice practice. Besides, the system of sons succeeding fathers had been established by the Kang Ding era at the latest. Where the clan organization was concerned, the major and minor clans in the Shang Dynasty were closely related. Therefore, the patriarchal law should have been generally formed in the Shang Dynasty, but the perfection and maturity of the patriarchal system should still wait till the Western Zhou Dynasty.

The clan was the most significant consanguineous organization for a state in its early form. It played an important role and significantly influenced national governance, social management, production activities, and daily life. As far as the state form was concerned, the Western Zhou Dynasty differed from the late Shang Dynasty. Its state organization and political operation system improved, but the clan was still powerful. It was still the link that maintained the social structure at that time and was an important factor in stabilizing the social order. The Zhou people rose from a "small state, destroyed the "big Shang," founded the Zhou Dynasty, stabilized the complex political situation during its early days, and eventually established a rule lasting for several centuries. The patriarchal clan system played a vital role in accomplishing all those tasks.

After the fall of the Western Zhou Dynasty and the relocation of the capital to the east by King Ping, the Zhou royal house declined. The original patriarchal clan system also had a new look under the new political environment of the Spring and Autumn period and continued to play an important role. The social structure and political system had undergone fundamental changes, and so had the patriarchal system by the end of the Spring and Autumn era. With the rise of Confucianism, the

patriarchal clan concept and system were further theorized and developed based on the traditional patriarchal clan system. Together with its connotation and operation mode, it became part of traditional Chinese ethics, profoundly affecting the society of that time and later generations.

3.3 *Tianming* (Heavenly Mandate) and *Depei* (Matching Heaven with Virtue)

There is a passage in the *Book of Documents: Duke of Shao's Admonition* recording the Duke of Shao's warning to King Cheng of Zhou, "Dwelling in this new city, let the king now sedulously cultivate the virtue of reverence. He may pray to Heaven for a long-abiding decree in his favor when all are devoted to this virtue." It means that the Duke of Shao hoped that King Cheng of Zhou could take prompt actions to respect virtue and conduct rule of virtue so that he and the dynasty could enjoy a long life. It shows that emulating virtue would affect the "Mandate of Heaven" and the dynasty's rise and fall to the Duke of Shao's mind.

Tianming ("Mandate of Heaven") and *depei* ("Matching Heaven with Virtue") were important components of political thought in the Western Zhou Dynasty. They constituted the moral principles of the ruling class. The proposition of "matching Heaven with one's virtues" and "having the mandate through one's virtue to govern the people" was a leap forward in Chinese ideology. "Virtue" was related to the belief system of the Western Zhou Dynasty, the origin of the philosophers' thought during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, and the establishment of the ancient Chinese cultural model. It is allegedly the core concept, second only to "Tao" in ancient China's macro- and micro-thought world.

According to the *Book of Rites: Biaoji*, "Under the Shang Dynasty, they honored Spiritual Beings, and led the people on to serve them; they put first the service of their manes, and last the usages of ceremony; first punishments, and then rewards; giving honor to the people, but not showing affection for them." It means that the Shang culture was fundamentally a spiritual-being culture. The oracle bone inscriptions show that the kings of the Shang Dynasty made decisions, big or small, by divination. The Shang society was shrouded by superstitions and worship of Shangdi ("Lord-on-High"), numerous ancestral gods, and various celestial and terrestrial deities. The Shang people endowed various gods with different powers, wills, and abilities, and the political system of the Shang Dynasty was theocratic. A Shang king's authority was primarily based on his reliance on spiritual beings, and he believed that his power came from their protection. They put the worship of ghosts and spirits before civil affairs when dealing with the relationship between humans and spiritual beings.

The demise of the Shang Dynasty exposed the drawbacks of theocracy and made the Zhou people realize that it was not enough to rely only on ghosts and spirits to keep their newly acquired political power. "The Mandate of Heaven given by Shangdi is not fixed," and a monarch must "cultivate his virtue" because Shangdi

only assisted the virtuous. Thus, they put forward the idea of “Respect Heaven and protect the people.” According to the *Book of Documents: Numerous Regions*, “But there were the kings of our Zhou, who treated well the multitudes of the people, and were able to sustain the burden of virtuous government. They could preside over all services to the spiritual Heaven.” The idea of “spiritual Heaven” means that Heaven was regarded as godly. A sweeping view of the literature on the Western Zhou Dynasty shows that the primary function of the *tian* (Heaven) as a spiritual being was to control the rise and fall of the dynasty and protect and bless the king and dynasty of Zhou. Its secondary function was to select and enthrone the monarch, and its tertiary role was to bless the people with happiness or punish them with disasters. A significant difference between the Zhou people’s worship of the celestial gods and Shangdi and that of the Shang people was that while believing Heaven controlled the destiny of a dynasty, the Zhou people clearly and closely combined this “Mandate of Heaven” with the moral concept. They might think they enjoyed *tianming*, but they also realized “its vicariousness” based on the rise and fall of the previous dynasty. *Tianming* was always in line with people’s conditions and opinions. “Heaven will certainly follow the people’s desires.” “Heaven sees what the people see and hear what the people hear.” To keep in line with Heaven, the monarch must “protect his people.” To meet the needs of “protecting the people,” the early Zhou rulers proposed a moral demand on themselves: *jingde* (respect virtue), believing that only by respecting virtue and rule of virtue could they avoid the fate of the Shang Dynasty. They also thought that whether virtue was respected or not was vital to enjoying *tianming* as long as possible. This concept was passed on among the Zhou Dynasty’s aristocrats, especially those in the ruling class, and became an official philosophy. The Zhou people applied the worship of Heaven in managing civil affairs based on the principle of respecting virtue. This people-oriented spirit with profound rational elements effectively prevented the appearance of theism and theocracy in China, lifting the curtain on the Chinese political tradition with people-oriented spirit and moralism.

The early oracle bone script for “德” (virtue) was written as “𠩺”, “𠩻”, or “𠩼”. According to Mr. Guo Moruo, a famed archaeologist, the character “德” consists of “𠩺” (integrity) and “心” (heart), meaning “setting the mind right.” His observation is echoed by *Daxue* (*Great Learning*)’s statement, “they who wished to cultivate their persons first rectified their hearts.” The “virtue” we understand mostly derives from systems and the normalization by propriety or rites. The concept of virtue in the Western Zhou Dynasty fell into two categories: “the virtues of the Mandate of Heaven” and “ancestral virtues.”

The “virtues of the Mandate of Heaven” was endowed by Heaven. According to the inscriptions on the Shi Qiang pan (an ancient Chinese bronze basin), “King Wen of Zhou ruled with the concept of harmony, so Shangdi granted him virtue, allowing him to have the world under Heaven.” Obviously, the Zhou people thought King Wen’s virtue derived from Heaven and that his virtue was from the Mandate of Heaven, not from himself. This view of virtue from Heaven continued into the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods. For example, Confucius said in his *Analects: Shu’er*, “Heaven produced the virtue that is in me.” The bamboo-slips text, *Zhougong Zhi*

Qinwu (The Dance of the Duke of Zhou with Zither Accompaniment), also states, “Heaven sent virtue down.” All the statements show that the Zhou people believed that Shangdi and Heaven were the primary sources of virtues.

The “ancestral virtues” referred to ancestors’ exploits, political decency, and integrity of character. Among the inscriptions on ordinary vessels for ancestral worship rituals of the Western Zhou Dynasty, there are many words praising the ancestors, such as “being virtuous through doubt and choice in various situations” and “upholding virtue and maintaining good character.” They indicate that the ancestors were owners of good virtues. Their virtues could be handed down to their later generations, making them possibly virtuous. However, the ancestral virtues did not naturally pass to their descents, who needed to emulate their ancestors. This way of becoming virtuous was what the Zhou people said about “following the model of ancestor’s virtues.”

If the concept of *tianming* was the core of the Zhou people’s political ideology, then the view of matching Heaven with virtues is at the heart of the core. The Zhou people might respect Heaven and Shangdi, believing they were the sources of virtues. However, the manifestation of Heaven’s influence required virtue as the intermediary. “Heaven is impartial and selfless and always helps the virtuous.” During the Western Zhou Dynasty, the source of virtues began to shift from Heaven to ancestors. By following the model of virtuous ancestors, people could bypass Heaven and Shangdi. They could acquire virtue by emulating their ancestors. As the critical link in the evolution of the concept of virtue, it shifted people’s focus on celestial gods to deliberate reflection on social ethics and interpersonal relationships and enabled the transition from theocracy to the rule of virtue and rule of propriety, a great leap forward in the history of the Chinese political system and ideology. In the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, the way to acquire virtues gradually changed from “following the virtuous ancestors’ models” to “cultivating virtue within oneself.” Thus, the source of virtue was closely linked to self-cultivation. In this way, the acquisition of virtue underwent a process of getting virtue from the exterior to the inner source before the Qin Dynasty. This transition was of great significance to the development of Chinese civilization.

3.4 The Institutional Reforms in the Various States

The level of social productivity increased significantly, and social relations also underwent profound changes during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods. A new social order gradually took shape, while the old institutions and interest strata still stubbornly existed. In order to obtain more land, property, and population and win the fierce competition, the various vassal states must reform and gain strength. Against this background, the multiple states successively launched their institutional reform movements. The more famous ones were Zichan’s Reforms, Li Kui’s Reforms, Wu Qi’s Reforms, Shen Buhai’s Reforms, and Shang Yang’s Reforms.

Zichan was a famous statesman and thinker of the State of Zheng during the Spring and Autumn period. He taught himself law and dealt with the dukes and princes, making remarkable achievements in his political career. During his tenure, Zichan promoted four good policies. The first was redefining the borders of fields and ditches and reorganizing the farmers into groups of five and ten. The second was reforming the land tax, using *qiu* (about ten *mu*) as a unit to collect military taxes. The practice satisfied the State of Zheng's practical needs to collect more taxes and increase military resources. The third was cast *ding* (bronze tripod) with legal codes inscribed in it for publication. The effect of casting the tripod was considerable: It set a precedent for ancient Chinese written laws, and its significance in enlightening people, breaking the old political pattern, and promoting social transformation and progress cannot be underestimated. The last was his refusal to close local schools where people discussed state affairs in their leisure time. Confucius highly appraised his intent to encourage the free airing of views. He complimented, "(Judging from his decision) I don't believe it when others say that Zichan is not benevolent." Zichan's reforms promoted social transformation to some extent, and the State of Zheng resurged as a result of his reforms.

Li Kui was a representative of Legalism during the Warring States period. Marquess Wen of the State of Wei hired him to implement the reforms and turned the state into one of the strongest during the period. The rule of law was at the core of Li Kui's reforms. Politically, he advocated abolishing the line of hereditary succession of official positions, selecting officials based on merit and ability, and weakening the political privileges of the nobility. Economically, he adamantly supported the idea of developing agriculture by making every effort to legally utilize the productive capacity of the land to increase the yield per unit area and by preventing merchants from speculating on grain with his *pingdi* (grain price equalizing) law. According to the law, the state should purchase grain from farmers at a fair price in good years and sell grain to ordinary people at a reasonable price in case of famine. Militarily, he established a system to assess and reward military personnel according to their performance and reassign them per their combat skills to boost the overall strength of the military. Legally, he compiled *Fajing* (*Book of Law*) to implement legal reforms from top to bottom. *The Book of Law* became the chief source of legal codes for later generations.

Wu Qi was a military strategist of the State of Wei with remarkable achievements in military reform. The main goal of Wu Qi's military reform was to build a standing army capable of fighting well. For this reason, he created a method for carefully selecting military soldiers through examination and promised the selected soldiers to exempt their corvée and field taxes, which effectively boosted the army's morale. The soldiers' enthusiasm for fighting significantly improved Wei's military strength. Unable to stay in the State of Wei after Marquess Wen of Wei's death, Wu Qi went to the State of Chu. The King Dao of Chu appointed him to implement institutional reforms. Politically, he abolished the line of hereditary succession, taking back the titles of those who had been crowned kings for over three generations, abolishing the title of those alienated from the clan, and relocating some old nobles to remote areas. While abolishing the aristocrats' privileges, Wu Qi advocated weakening the

ministers' power, prohibiting officials from forming factions for personal gain, and rewarding officials for being committed to their duties. He also supported clarifying officials' responsibilities, firing redundant officials, and adopting a policy to select the worthy, appoint the capable, and dismiss the incompetent. Intellectually, to avoid unnecessary wars and social upheavals, Wu Qi banned diplomats of the School of Vertical and Horizontal Alliances from going around to urge monarchs to adopt their political views with persuasive eloquence. Militarily, he paid equal attention to farming and military affairs and turned people into farmers and soldiers at once. He also intensified military training to increase the army's fighting capacity.

Shen Buhai, also known as Shenzi, was from the State of Zheng. After conquering the State of Zheng, the Duke Zhao of Han hired him as the prime minister to preside over the reforms in the State of Han. Shen Buhai maintained that the monarch must strengthen his totalitarian rule. He pointed out that a monarch must "hold power over people's lives" and emphasized the dictatorship of the monarch in state power. At the same time, the monarch must enforce *fa* (law) and *shu* (tactic of a monarch to assess and use his ministers). He believed that "a monarch must be law-conscious and maintain justice" and, "based on the ministers' abilities," "reward them for their merit and promote them accordingly." He reorganized the official establishment, intensifying their examination and supervision to increase the state's administrative effectiveness at a large scale. As part of his military reform, he incorporated aristocrats' private soldiers into the state's military force. He strictly trained the military to increase the state's combat effectiveness. Economically, he encouraged the development of agriculture and handicrafts and advocated that people open up more wasteland and produce more cereals. He also emphasized and encouraged the development of crafts, especially weapon manufacturing. The State of Han's smelting and casting industry was considerably developed during the Warring States period. So much so that there were sayings at the time, "Han's swords are the best" and "All the strongest bows and crossbows come from Han."

Shang Yang's Reforms in the Duke Xiao of Qin's era were the most thorough of all the reforms implemented in the various states. The reforms can be summarized in the following aspects. First, Shang Yang rewarded farming and preparedness for war and promoted agriculture while restraining commerce. He stipulated that those who produced more grain and cloth could be exempted from corvées and taxes. He also restricted the scope of commerce operations and levied heavy taxes on merchants. Second, he promoted establishing counties and made the county the local administrative unit by setting up the county-level bureaucracy. The county had jurisdiction over several sub-administrative divisions like today's townships, towns, and villages known as *du*, *xiang*, *yi*, and *ju*. Third, Shang Yang abolished the line of hereditary succession and awarded people the twenty military ranks of honor based on the merits achieved in wars. Fourth, he unified the weights and measures and promulgated their standards. Five, he compiled a household registry and stipulated that each resident must be registered and military taxes must be collected on a per-household and per-head basis. Shang Yang's Reforms severely affected the old aristocrats' interests. He was torn apart by five chariots as capital punishment after Duke Xiao of Qin passed

away. However, the reforms he implemented were continued, laying the foundation for Qin to unify China by annexing the other six powerful states later.

After the reforms, the rulers during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods made their states prosperous and their military forces strong to varying degrees. The reform movements significantly changed China's society with unprecedented scope and depth. The state political institutions, economic structures, and legal systems became the sources of the institutional civilization of China for two thousand years to come.

3.5 Various Schools of Thought and Their Exponents

The Spring and Autumn and the Warring States era was one of the most splendid periods of Chinese spiritual civilization. A Hundred Schools of Thought is a general term for various academic schools in the pre-Qin period. The classification of the "Hundred Schools of Thought" was first found in Sima Tan's *Lun Liujia Yaozhi* (*On the Essential Ideas of the Six Schools*). He categorized them as Yin-yang (Naturalism), Confucianism, Mohism, Names, Legalism, and Taoism. Based on Sima Tan, Liu Xin of the Han Dynasty added another four schools in his *Qilue* (*The Seven Summaries*): Diplomacy (Vertical and Horizontal Alliances, Syncretism, Agrarianism, and Small Talks, making the total ten. The modifier "hundred" is mere widespread hyperbole meant to illustrate the heyday of the development of various forms of ideology during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods. The fact was that there were only a dozen or so schools of thought, of which Confucianism, Taoism, and Legalism had the most significant influence on the Grand Unity politics of the later dynasties.

The School of Confucianism

Confucianism was one of the most influential schools of thought in Chinese history. Confucianism used the Six Arts (rites, music, archery, chariotry, calligraphy, and mathematics) as the norms, emphasized education, advocated "rites and music" and "benevolence and uprightness," promoted "faithfulness and compassion," and supported the idea of "rule of virtue" and "benevolent government." Representative figures were Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi.

With Kong as his clan name, Confucius's given name was Qiu, and his courtesy name was Zhongni. A founder of Confucianism, he was from the State of Lu during the Spring and Autumn period. At the core of his thought are *li* ("propriety or rites") and *ren* ("benevolence"). *Li* constitutes the decrees, regulations, and institutions for maintaining the hierarchical order and the code of conduct for members of society. Confucius especially admired the rites of the Zhou Dynasty. He believed, "To subdue one's self and return to propriety is perfect virtue." He combined "benevolence" in the ethical category with *li* in the social category. Confucius advocated the idea of "exercising government through virtue," believing that managing state affairs with morality and feudal ethics was the noblest way to govern a state. He advocated that

“there should be no class distinction in teaching” and established private schools where education is concerned. By doing so, Confucius broke up the aristocrats’ monopoly on school education and made education accessible to ordinary people, which conformed to the trend of social development at that time.

With Ke as his name, Mencius was from the State of Lu. With his significance in the School of Confucianism only secondary to that of Confucius (known as “The Sage of Sages”), he was thus reputed as “The Second Sage.” Mencius put forward the famous thesis, “The people are the most important element in a nation; the spirits of the land and grain are the next; the sovereign is the lightest.” It has greatly influenced the people-oriented thought of later generations in China. Mencius held that human nature was inherently good and brought forth “the theory in the original goodness of human nature.” Mencius inherited Confucius’ thought of “benevolence” and developed the concept of “benevolent government.” He advocated, “If its ruler puts in practice a benevolent government, no power will be able to prevent his becoming sovereign.” “Benevolent government” is “the way for a sovereign to govern.” He said that for a man of exemplary character should, neither riches nor honors can corrupt him, neither poverty nor lowly can make him swerve from principles, and neither threats nor force can bend him.”

Xunzi, named Kuang, was a native of the State of Zhao. He critically accepted and creatively developed orthodox Confucian thought and theory. He “exalted rites,” advocating the Confucian view of “equally respecting propriety and the legalist ideology” and attaching equal importance to *wangdao* (benevolent governance) and *badao* (hegemonic governance). He advocated “adapting the law of Heaven and making use of it.” He put forward the theory that “humans are bad by nature” and maintained that etiquette and law were designed to restrain evil nature. Therefore, he attached great importance to the influence of customs and the education of people. Xunzi synthesized the best of all the pre-Qin Confucians’ thoughts. His philosophy also had a far-reaching impact on Legalism.

The School of Taoism

The School of Taoism advocated “governance by inaction” and conformity to nature, which profoundly impacted ancient Chinese political thought and natural philosophy. At the core of the Taoist thought is “Tao (Way),” and the representatives of the Taoists were Laozi and Zhuangzi.

Laozi, rendered as Lao Tzu in English, had Er as his given name and Li as his family name. His courtesy name was Boyang, and his posthumous name was Li Dan. Therefore, he was also referred to as Lao Dan. He worked as an official in the Zhou Dynasty to manage book collections. The primary category of Laozi’s thought is “Dao” or “Way”. He believed that the “Way” models itself on nature, and everything under heaven was born from the “Way”. Laozi’s thought is a bit naively dialectical. He argued, “Existence and non-existence give birth to each other, difficulty and easiness produce each other, length and shortness fashion out of each other, height and lowness arise from the contrast of each other, musical notes and tones become harmonious through their mutual relationship, and front and back give the idea of following each other either way.” Politically, Laozi advocated governing by doing

nothing that goes against nature and teaching without words. As he said, “Therefore, the sage manages affairs without doing anything and conveys his instructions without speech.” He yearned for “a little state with a small population,” where “its people had no contact with those in the neighboring states within sight even if being able to hear their roosters’ crow and their dogs’ bark.”

Zhuangzi, given name Zhou, was a native of the State of Song. Like Laozi, he also upheld the “Way” as the fundamental principle. Therefore, he was often placed with Laozi, and their thoughts were referred to as the Lao-Zhuang School. Zhuangzi elevated “Way” to a cosmic dimension, advocating conformity to the heavenly way and abandoning “human action.” He believed everything was produced as one, and “Heaven, Earth, and I were produced together, and all things and I are one.” He maintained that humans must pull their minds out of everything and break through their limitations to grasp all things as a whole. He supported the idea of “conditioning oneself to achieve a balance of the body and mind” and “being at peace with the world and the self.” Zhuangzi’s writings are peculiar in imagination, changeable in styles, and rich in romanticism. In the form of fables, his essays are humorous and satirical, significantly impacting the literature of the later generations.

The School of Legalism

Legalism was one of the schools of thought in the Warring States period, advocating the rule of law “regardless of family relations and social strata.” Its theory provided the theoretical basis and action plan for establishing the grandly unified dynasty under the monarchal dictatorship. Representative Legalists include Shang Yang, Shen Buhai, and Han Fei.

With Gongsun as his original family name and Yang his given name, Shang Yang was a native of the State of Wei. “Rule by law” is an essential thought of Shang Yang. To him, “the law is the ballast of the state.” He adamantly advocated replacing “rites” with “law” and repeatedly reminded the monarch “always to keep the law in mind.” He believed the importance of law lies in “determining the ownership of things to prevent disputes” and “rewarding merits to stop the violence.” Shang Yang also put forward the thought of “indiscriminative punishment,” “neither remitting punishment nor tolerating wrongdoings,” and “neither emulating the ancient nor following the present.” His view had a far-reaching influence on the rule of law in later generations.

Shen Buhai, also named Shenzi, was a native of the State of Zheng. The *Records of the Grand Historian* states that Shen Buhai specialized in “the theories of Huangdi and Laozi” and was particularly well-versed with *shu*. Shen Buhai’s concept of *shu* is based on “law,” that is, “a monarch must be law-conscious and uphold justice.” *Shu* was the tactic of a monarch to assess and use his subordinates. According to Shen Buhai, a monarch must “reward his ministers for their merit and promote them accordingly.” That is to say, the state’s administrative efficiency could be improved by making greater effort to rectify the officials’ working style, by assessing and supervising them, and by meting out punishment and rewards discriminately. Shen Buhai’s idea of *shu* provided a theoretical basis for the rulers to administer state affairs and solidify their monarchal centralism.

A native of the State of Han, Han Fei was a student of Xunzi. Han Fei was the master of Legalist thought. He synthesized the best of Shang Yang's "law," Shen Buhai's *shu*, and Shen Dao's *shi* (circumstantial advantage or authority). He advocated that "law enforcement equals education," believing that "a state will be strong with law-abiding citizens" and "crimes can only be fought with punishment." Meanwhile, he emphasized the justice of the law, arguing that the law is above the ways of the world. Han Fei believed that a monarch needed to rule his state with *shu*. According to him, the essence of the rule of *shu* was selecting and employing talents, holding individuals accountable, and being strict and fair in rewards and punishments. If the "law" was the essence, then *shu* was the foundation. In Han Fei's opinion, *shi* was a deterrent and enforcer, making the ministers and commons submissive to the monarch. Only by *shi* could a monarch rule his people. The idea of the unity of "law, *shu*, and *shi*" laid the foundation for the theory of monarchal dictatorship and thus had a tremendous significance in his time. It also played a positive role in solidifying state powers and achieving the country's unification.

During the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, various schools of thought drew on and merged with each other while contending with one another. Such a situation provided the ideological basis for the coming grand unification. After Emperor Wu of Han "proscribe all non-Confucian schools of thought and espoused the Six Confucian Classics," Confucianism gradually became central to traditional Chinese culture. It remained the mainstream ideology in China for over 2000 years and had an unparalleled influence on the formation of the spirits of the Chinese nation. However, ruling China with "overt Confucianism and covert Legalism" and "virtue as primary and punishment as secondary" was the only choice the Chinese dynastic rulers had to make.

3.6 Oracle Bone Script and Bronze Inscriptions

Oracle Bone Script

In the summer of 1899, Wang Yirong, chief directorate of education of the Qing Dynasty, caught malaria. While decocting traditional Chinese medicinal herbs, he spotted some mysterious symbols on one of the ingredients known as *longgu* (fossils of some ancient animals). The oracle bone script was thus discovered.

The oracle bone script refers to the characters inscribed on tortoise shells and animal bones for divination. About 150,000 oracle bones with more than 4500 characters have been found since the first discovery of the oracle bone script in 1899. What the script has recorded is remarkably rich, covering the aspects of the social life of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, including politics, military affairs, culture, social customs, astronomy, calendric system, and medicine. The oracle bone script is an incredibly precious resource for studying the history of the Shang and Zhou dynasties.

The Shang kings always used tortoise shells and animal bones for divination and then had the questions carved on them. The shells used for the purposes mainly were plastrons. Sometimes, vertebral shells were also used. Animal bones largely came from bovine shoulder blades. Some inscribers also used the skull bones from cows, deer, or even humans, and tiger bones could also be their pick. The shells or bones had to be selected, cut, sawed, scraped, ground, chiseled, and drilled before they were qualified for inscription. Typically, some depressions were drilled or chiseled on the surface of a shell or bone before the divination. The depressions were heated during the divination to crack the shell or bone. The cracks were known as *zhao* (sign), and by their various shapes, diviners would foretell good or ill luck. They would carve or write the content of the divination on the shell or bone, thus completing the entire process.

The oracle bones unearthed so far were mainly from the Shang Dynasty. Very few oracle bones from the Western Zhou Dynasty have been discovered. They refer to the oracle bones discovered in 1952 used for divination during the Western Zhou Dynasty. Some archaeologists claim that the first Western Zhou oracle bones were those excavated at Bin County, Shaanxi Province in 1951. So far, 401 pieces have been made public, including 12 divination bones and 389 divination shells. There are many places where the oracle bones of the Western Zhou Dynasty were found. Those unearthed in Zhouyuan, Qishan County, Shaanxi, were the most significant ones.

Oracle bone inscriptions embodies the three elements of Chinese calligraphy: *yongbi* (the way of using the brush), *jiezi* (character composition), and *zhangfa* (organization and structure of a piece of writing). In the introduction to his *Yin Qi Cuibian* (*Collection of Shang Documents*), Guo Moruo comments on the calligraphy of oracle bone script, “The divination inscriptions on the shells and bones are so exquisitely and beautifully carved that they still fascinate us even after a few thousand years. The styles of the script differed due to different inscribers and times of the inscription. The characters of the Wu Ding era are mostly vigorous, and those of the Di Yi times are all beautiful. Their spacing, structure, and coordination are perfect enough for us to know that the carved characters we have had so far are masterpieces of the calligraphy of a specific era. The inscribers were as good as the most famous calligraphers in Chinese calligraphy history, such as Yan Zhenqing and Liu Gongquan.” The strokes of the oracle bone script are written neatly and forcefully. Their curves, straightness, thickness, and thinness are all flawless. But most of the turning strokes have square corners. Even judging from the organization and structure of the entire writing, the oracle bone script reveals the sophisticated skills of carving and writing, albeit the limitation of the sizes and shapes of the shells or bones. They greatly influenced the use of pen and knife in later seal carving (Fig. 3.2).

Bronze Inscriptions

According to *Han Shu* (*Book of Han*): *Treatise on Sacrifices*, a bronze *ding* (tripod) was unearthed at Meiyang during the reign of the Emperor Xuan of the Han Dynasty. Zhang Chang, a scholar-official of the time, had a penchant for ancient characters. He interpreted this vessel named Shichen (Executive Minister) and pointed out that



Fig. 3.2 Tortoise plastron with divination inscription

it belonged to the Zhou Dynasty. The inscriptions recorded the praises and reproach a king of Zhou meted out to his ministers, who had them carved on the artifact to commemorate the incident. Zhang Chang's analysis made sense. It was the earliest record of studying bronze inscriptions in the handed-down literature.

Bronze inscriptions were cast on bronze vessels. As the Zhou people called bronze *jin*, meaning “metal” or “gold” to the Chinese today, the characters are given the name *jinwen* (literally “metal or gold characters” in Chinese). Since most of the inscriptions have been found on bronze bells, *jinwen* used to be called *zhongdingwen* (bell-tripod characters).

There are already a few inscriptions on some bronze vessels from the Erlitou Culture of the early Shang Dynasty. Unfortunately, there are no scientifically excavated objects. The few we have are not unearthed. However, their values are undeniable. The earliest bronze inscriptions were products of the early Shang Dynasty. A living example is the *gen'ge* (a cauldron with three hollow legs) in the collection of National Museum of China. It is said to have been discovered at Yang Village, Zhengzhou City, Henan Province. It has an erect ear and a thinned neck decorated with circular designs. The hollowed legs with long bottom parts are also embellished with V-shaped circular patterns. There is a “” (*gen*) character on the edge of the opening. The Tokyo National Museum has a *ding* (bronze vessel) featuring an erect ear, a deep belly, a round bottom, and three legs with pointed feet. On this artifact's body, measuring 20.6 cm tall, is a band of *taotie* (a mythical ferocious animal) decorations along with patterning like stringed beads. There is a relief character under each of the double ears at the folded edge that looks like “月” (moon). Bronze inscriptions appeared early among ancient Chinese characters. They spanned a much longer time than the oracle bone script: about 2000 years from the Erlitou Culture period of the Shang Dynasty to the Qin and Han dynasties when bronze inscriptions still lingered.



Fig. 3.3 Maogong ding and inscription

Therefore, it is safe to say that bronze inscriptions took shape very early, and they have been discovered in a much wider geographical space (Fig. 3.3).

The bronze inscriptions are precious resources for studying the history of the pre-Qin era and the Qin and Han dynasties. The number of characters on the bronzeware varies. So far, the Mao Gong ding had the most: 497. The inscriptions are rich in contents, ranging from sacrificial ceremonies, bestowing titles, warfare, oaths of alliances, weddings, and lawsuits over disputed estates. They reflected all aspects of that time's political, religious, and social life. Research on inscriptions generally needs to be combined with contemporary literature, such as the *Book of Songs*, the *Book of Documents*, *Zuo Zhuan* (*Commentary of Zuo*), and *Discourses of States*. Bronze inscriptions also have a high artistic value and are extremely popular among calligraphers and calligraphy enthusiasts.

Chapter 4

The Qin-Han Civilization



Li Liu

Qin Shi Huang (First Emperor of Qin) annexed the other six powerful states and founded the Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC). The dynasty fell in the hands of Qin Er Shi (Second Emperor of Qin). After the demise of the Qin Dynasty, Liu Bang, King of Han, and his bloc fought the Chu- Han War with Xiang Yu, King of Chu, and his bloc for four years. Liu Bang overwhelmed his rival in 202 BC and established the Han Dynasty, known as the Western Han (206 BC–8 CE) in history. A consort relative named Wang Mang usurped the throne in 8 CE, overthrowing the Western Han, and founded the Xin Dynasty (8–24 CE). He implemented reforms that led to social conflicts due to their impracticality. The Xin Dynasty fell under the attack of the Lülin and Chimei (Red Eyebrows) rebel armies. Liu Xiu, a member of the same clan as Liu Bang, inherited the title of the Han Dynasty and reestablished it, known as the Eastern Han (25–220 CE) in history. Cao Pi usurped the throne in the 25th year of the Jian'an reign (220) and ended the Han Dynasty once and for all.

The Qin and Han dynasties were extraordinary periods in the history of Chinese civilization. Qin Shi Huang annexed six other powerful states and concluded the hundreds of years of splits and contentions among various vassal states. He founded the first-ever centralized, unified, multi-ethnic country in Chinese history. In the following four and a half centuries, the rulers of the Qin and Han dynasties tried many institutional restructures and constructions to maintain their centralized, unified state political system, giving rise to the basic model of the centralized bureaucratic system under absolute monarchy in China that lasted for over 2000 years. This laid the foundation for the long-term continuation of Chinese civilization.

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X. Bu (ed.), *The History of Chinese Civilization*, China Insights,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7125-1_4

4.1 Qin Shi Huang Unified China by Annexing Six States

In 247 BC, the 13-year-old Zheng, King of Qin, succeeded to the throne and later became the famous Qin Shi Huang. In 238 BC, he quelled the rebellion staged by Lao Ai, Marquis of Changxin. In 237 BC, he got rid of powerful minister Lü Buwei and started to hold all the power. From 230 to 221 BC, Qin successfully conquered the Han, Zhao, Wei, Chu, Yan, and Qi states and accomplished the great cause of unifying China, establishing the first centralized, unified, multi-ethnic country in Chinese history.

After the completion of the great cause of unification, Zheng, King of Qin, immediately began to improve the centralized bureaucratic system under absolute monarchy. First and foremost, he decided on the imperial honorific title, thinking that continuing to use the title “king” was no longer compelling enough to show his great cause to advantage. Therefore, he took a character from the legendary Sanhuang (Three Sovereigns) and another from Wudi (Five Emperors) and created the title *huangdi* (rendered as “emperor” in English), which are different characters from the name Huangdi (Yellow Emperor). *Huangdi* (emperor) had since been used for over 2000 years as a Chinese monarchical title until the demise of the Qing Dynasty. He made his son and grandson, who would succeed him, emperors II and III, hoping that the Qin’s rule “may last ten-thousand generations till eternity.” He also instituted a series of systems related to the emperor. For example, he monopolized the term *zhen*, to style an emperor like him. Incidentally, *zhen* had been used in ancient Chinese as the first-person pronoun “I” and the possessive pronoun “my” exclusive to emperors. He also changed *ming* (an order that must be implemented) into *zhi* and *ling* (an order ought to be followed) into *zhao*. He also altered the term for a royal seal from *yin* to *xi*.

Qin Shi Huang established an immense bureaucracy in the central government. The emperor had a bureaucracy of the Three Dukes under him: *Chengxiang* (Counselor-in-chief), *Taiwei* (Commander-in-chief), and *Yushi Dafu* (Censor-in-chief). They were in charge of administration, military affairs, and supervision. The three dukes’ responsibilities varied so that they would check each other while the absolute power was still in the emperor’s hands. Under the Three Dukes, Qin Shi Huang set up the Nine Courts led by *Fengchang* (Chamberlain for Ceremonials), *Langzhongling* (Chamberlain for Attendants), *Weiwei* (Chamberlain for the Palace Garrison), *Taipu* (Chamberlain for the Imperial Stud), *Tingwei* (Chamberlain for Law Enforcement), *Dianke* (Chamberlain for Dependencies), *Zongzheng* (Chamberlain for the Imperial Clan), *Zhisu Neishi* (Chamberlain for the National Treasury), and *Shaofu* (Chamberlain for the Palace Revenues). They were responsible for specific government affairs such as the judiciary, finance, imperial guards, and royal family management. The Three Dukes and Nine Chamberlains discussed principal imperial policies together at the meetings called *tingyi* (court discussions or conferences). But the final decisions were always made by emperor to ensure the supremacy of imperial power in the system.

Qin Shi Huang set up the two-level administrative divisions of counties and commanderies. He divided the Qin empire into 36 *jun* (commanderies). He made adjustments by adding some prefectures as the territory expanded, especially after conquering the Xiongnu in the north and annexing the south. Under the jurisdiction of each commandery, he set up some *xian* (counties) and *dao* (in habitats of ethnic minorities). The chiefs of the counties and prefectures were appointed instead of hereditary. There were three officials in a commandery's office: *Shou* (Governor), *Wei* (Commandery Defender), and *Jian* (Supervisor), in charge of the civil, financial, and judiciary affairs of the commanderies. The Commandery Defender was responsible for the commandery's military equipment and public security. The Supervisor monitored and coordinated the commandery's affairs. The titles of county magistrates varied according to the county's population size. The county's magistrate was called *Xianling* if its population reached 10,000 households and above and *Xianzhang* if the households were below that number. *Cheng* (Aide) and *Wei* (Commandant) assisted *Xianling* or *Xianzhang* in handling the county's administrative, military, and public security affairs. A county fell into *xiang* (comparable to a township), *ting* (ten *li*), *li* (similar to a village), and *xiangli* as the empire's grassroots administrative units. They were charged with executing many specific affairs, such as collecting taxes and corvées, cultivating and educating people, enforcing laws, and maintaining public security. The commandery-county system helped the Qin Dynasty form a complete and systematic administrative body comprising the central government, the commanderies, the counties, and the townships. The new system also abolished the hereditary enfeoffment system based on blood relationships since the pre-Qin period. It was a significant innovation in the history of Chinese institutional civilization. It benefited the central control and management of the local affairs and effectively kept the country unified by removing local forces' potential threat to the central government. It marked the formal establishment of the centralized bureaucratic system under absolute monarchy in ancient China. Although the Qin Dynasty fell in the hands of Emperor II, its system was inherited by the later generations and continuously improved and developed.

In June 2002, more than 38,000 bamboo slips of the Qin Dynasty were excavated from an ancient well in the old Liye Town, Longshan County, the Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Hunan Province. The discovery shocked China and the world. The main contents of the remaining slips were government documents of the Qin Dynasty's Qianling County, Dongting Commandery. They date back to a time between the 25th year of Qin Shi Huang's reign (222 BC) and the second year of Emperor of Qin II's reign (208 BC). The documents involve many aspects of the Qin society, including politics, society, economy, law, and culture. Featuring large amount and detailed contents, the documents serve as excellent materials for studying the Qin Dynasty's document administration, as well as grassroots social institutions, and their specific operations.

Governance through documents was a system where ancient imperial courts or local offices issued, executed, and managed administrative documents. The bamboo slips from the Qin Dynasty unearthed in Liye and other places further prove that the

Qin Dynasty implemented a rigid system of governance through administrative documents. The central government's policies and regulations were promoted to the whole country through documents, and local governments' performances and social developments were similarly reported to the central government. The central government was in the core decision-making position in the entire process of document administration. It had the full centralized power to control the flow of government documents, top-down or bottom-up, by issuing them to the local governments and reviewing and replying to their papers. The emperor and the Three Dukes handled government documents directly. The Nine Chamberlains could also deal with the documents independently within their power. The commandery was the essential institution for processing the documents. The process of administering the documents was mostly finished at this level. In most cases, the primary affairs of a commandery were reported to the central government in the form of *shangji* (year-end performance appraisal) documents. The county and township were where the documents were executed. Such a system that linked the emperor to the commandery, county, and village mainly by administrative documents was the world's first and most complete bureaucratic system.

The various states used different writing systems during the Warring States period. Qin Shi Huang ordered Li Si to unify them with adjustments based on the Small Seal script the Qin people had used during that period. Qin Shihuang made the empire use this new writing as the officially standardized script. It was said that Cheng Miao, a jailor of the Qin Dynasty, created the Clerical script based on the character forms already popular among the commons. Clerical script had less sophisticated strokes and were thus easier to write. The Western Han Dynasty had universally adopted the Clerical script. After its founding, the Qin Dynasty abolished the currencies of the six rival states and enforced the use of *Ban Liang*, which corresponds to a half tael (0.68 g). The empire uniformly minted the currency and strictly prohibited private minting. The Qin Dynasty promoted the weights and measures developed by Shang Yang throughout the empire. A bronze plate with Qin Shi Huang's imperial edict carved intaglio in the 26th year of his reign (221 BC) was unearthed at the handicraft workshop site at the Changling Station in Yaodian Town, Xianyang City, Shaanxi Province, in 1961. It explicitly recorded the act of unifying the weights and measures. It read, "On the 26th year, *Huangdi* has finished annexing all the vassal states under Heaven. People began to live peacefully. His Majesty established the title *Huangdi* (Emperor) to style himself and ordered Counselors-in-chief Zhuang and Wan to standardize weights and measures, unifying whatever is inconsistent and clarifying whatever is unclear."

Vehicles had been designed differently in various states during the Warring States period. After unifying China, Qin Shi Huang stipulated that "all carriages must leave the same length of ruts" and "all people must act on the same moral principles." According to the regulations, the wheel track of all the carriages must be six *chi* (about 1.38.6 cm) throughout the country. Simultaneously, Qin Shi Huang wanted to change the prevailing habits and customs of the Chinese, trying to establish a unified code of ethics and conduct. In the 28th year during his reign (219 CE), he had a stone on Mount Tai engraved with a warning that men and women must respect each other

Fig. 4.1 Edict inscribed on bronze dating to the 26th year under the reign of Qin Shi Huang



and stay within their specific boundaries: Men should work outside, whereas women must fulfill their responsibilities at home (Fig. 4.1).

To place the vast territory under effective control, Qin Shi Huang decreed that *chidao* (royal highways) be built, leading from the capital Xianyang to various parts of Qin China. The expressway was about 69 m wide. The middle lane was designated for the emperor's use, and trees were planted every three *zhang* (about seven meters) on each side of the highway. Famous *chidao* avenues included the Shangjun Road, the Linjin Road, the Dongfang Road, the Wuguan Road, and the Xifang Road. After his northern expedition against the Xiongnu, Qin Shi Huang had another *chidao* constructed from Xianyang to Jiuyuan (west of today's Baotou, Inner Mongolia) via Yunyang (northwest of today's Chunhua, Shaanxi Province). It was straight and extended about 750 km. He also had the "Five-chi Road" built from today's Yibin, Sichuan Province, to Qujing (or Zhaotong, according to another theory), Yunnan Province. The roads leading in all directions promoted the exchange of goods among various places and boosted commercial development. Simultaneously, they also sped up troops' and other military personnel's mobility, thus improving the central government's ability to govern and rule the whole country.

Qin Shi Huang launched several military wars, among which the most influential were the attacks against the Baiyue and the Xiongnu. After destroying the State of Chu in 223 BC, Qin Shi Huang continued to advance south and successively took over the Yue-inhabited regions (today's Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Fujian). Qin Shi Huang's army met stubborn resistance when attacking the Yue people in Guangdong and Guangxi. In 214 BC, Qin Shi Huang recruited hundreds of thousands of civilians

and sent them to attack the Baiyue tribes again under the command of Ren Xiao and Zhao Tuo. The Qin army was so powerful that it quickly occupied a vast area, including northern Vietnam. As a result, the entire Lingnan region was included in the Qin Dynasty's territory. In 215 BC, Qin Shi Huang ordered general Meng Tian to lead 300,000 troops in an attack against the Xiongnu in the north. Meng Tian's army recaptured the Hetao area in one fell swoop. Then, the Qin army crossed the Yellow River and drove the Xiongnu out of the area south of the Yin Mountains. Qin Shi Huang built the Great Wall to protect the newly occupied territory from being harassed by the Xiongnu and connected it with the walls constructed by the other states during the Warring States period. The Great Wall stretched over 2500 km from today's Min County, Gansu Province, to today's Shanhai Pass. Therefore, it is called the *Wanli Changcheng* (literally "A Wall of Ten Thousand *Li*," with a *li* equaling half a kilometer. By then, Qin Shi Huang had established a vast country from today's Gansu Province in the west, the sea and today's DPRK in the east, the Yin Mountains and North Liaoning in the north, and today's northern Vietnam in the south.

In 213 BC, Erudite Chun Yuyue lashed out at the commandery-county system and advocated enfeoffing dukes and princes again. Counselor-in-chief Li Si believed some scholars tried to hoodwink the people by learning from the past instead of the present and disparaged the present with the past. He suggested that all the privately collected books on the Hundred Schools of Thought be burned, excluding the books on Qin's history, medicine, divination, agriculture, and those collected by erudites. He also proposed executing whoever dared to mention the *Book of Songs* and the *Book of Documents* and exterminating the clan of those disparaging the present by extolling the past. The book-burning was a catastrophe in the history of human civilization because many precious pre-Qin literature and classics were lost as a result. Scholars' criticism of Qin Shi Huang's act enraged him, so he ordered the burying alive over 460 Confucian scholars and alchemists who had allegedly spread rumors to delude people. The two incidents were known to historians as Burning of Books and Burying of Scholars.

Qin Shi Huang also ordered that all the weapons in the civilians' hands be confiscated, melted, and cast into musical instrument racks and 12 bronze figures to prevent the old forces of the six states from staging armed rebellions. At the same time, all the military defense facilities, such as city walls, moats, and mountain passes, be destroyed. He relocated the aristocrats of the six old states to places like Guanzhong (present-day central Shaanxi) and Bashu (present-day Sichuan) to uproot them from their homeland and place them under the nose of the central government. Measures like these helped maintain the state power's stability to some extent.

4.2 The Emperor Wu of Han with Great Talent and Bold Vision

Liu Bang founded the Han Dynasty in 202 CE. To stabilize the political situation and improve the lives of the destitute people, the early Han rulers adopted policies to recover from social upheaval and restore national production. The policies were designed to “reduce corvées and taxes,” “rehabilitate the people,” ease some penalties, and reduce sentences. As a result, the early Han Dynasty made remarkable progress in stabilizing social order and developing the economy. It also consolidated its rule with each passing day. According to the *Book of Han: Treatise on Food and Commodities*, the dynasty was politically stable, with people having enough to eat and wear and the government granaries filled to the rim during the 70 years from the dynasty’s beginning and Emperor Wu of Han’s succession to the throne. The emperor had a better condition to achieve his ambitions.

In the third year of the Houyuan era (141 BC), Emperor Jing of Han died, succeeded by Liu Che, the heir apparent. He became Emperor Wu and was 16 that year. In the following 54 years of his reign, this talented and ambitious emperor pushed the Chinese civilization to a new stage. On the one hand, he continued the policies implemented during the Rule of Wen and Jing, while on the other hand, he adopted many measures to consolidate the dynasty’s centralism.

Emperor Wu of Han set up *zhongchao* (inner court) within the central government to bolster his decision-making power. He appointed his favorite courtiers to the posts of *Shizhong* (Palace Attendants), *Jishizhong* (Palace Stewards), and *Changshi* (Attendants-in-ordinary). He allowed them to make decisions and handle memorials with the emperor, thus forming the inner court. The Three Dukes and Nine Chamberlains that followed the previous convention became the “outer court” as a mere executive body. Its status was reduced dramatically. Decisions on essential political matters were first made by the “inner court” before being executed by the “outer court” and the Counselor-in-chief. The imperial power was strengthened, with the authority of the Counselor-in-chief-led “outer court” weakened.

The Emperor Wu of Han promulgated his “Edict of Expanding Favors” locally to weaken the vassal states’ power. He demanded that the dukes or princes of the vassals subdivide their territories and enfeoff their sons and brothers, making them vassals as well. The emperor decided on the vassals’ names, hence “extending his favors.” This way, large vassals would not have more than ten cities, and the vassal system fell apart without the court’s effort to demote anyone. In the first year of the Yuanshou era (122 BC), Emperor Wu of Han promulgated the *Zuoguan Lü* (*Law of Vassal’s Officials*) and *Fuyi Fa* (*Benefit-reducing Law*) to weaken officials’ position in the empire’s officialdom and limit scholars’ communication with the dukes and princes. He forcibly restrained his courtiers from attaching themselves to the dukes and princes and forbade the latter to form factions. In the fifth year of the Yuanding era (112 BC), Emperor Wu revoked the ranks of 106 vassals on the excuse that they had shortchanged their cash tributes to the empire’s ancestral temple. From then on,

the vassals could only live on the rent and taxes they collected from the commons and were excluded from political affairs.

In the fifth year of the Yuanfeng era (106 BC), Emperor Wu divided the areas outside the capital into 13 regions, each headed by a *Cishi* (Regional Inspector) with a salary of 600 *dan* (1 *dan* equaled 30 kg in the Western Han Dynasty) of grain. The *Cishi* regularly inspected the commanderies and vassals. He also supervised county magistrates and senior officials of princedoms and marquisates whose yearly payment was 2000 *dan* of grain and monitored wealthy and influential families, so as to hold these people accountable to the emperor's six targeted principles. In the fourth year of the Zhenghe era (89 BC), Emperor Wu set up the post of *Sili Xiaowei* (Metropolitan Commandant), designated to supervise the court's officials in the seven commanderies off the capital area.

In the first year of the Yuanguang era (134 BC), per Dong Zhongshu's suggestion, Emperor Wu ordered each princedom and marquisate to recommend a person known for his filial piety and another reputed for his clean record. He then institutionalized it into what has been known as *juxiaolian* (recommending people of filial piety and clean record). Later, he added the categories of *xiucai* (talents from the commons recommended by each commandery), *xianliang fangzheng* (people with moral integrity and professional competence), and *wenxue* (instructors). This *chaju* (commandery quota or elevation after examination) system stipulated that the candidates must be "recommended from the *xiang* (townships) and selected from *li* (villages)." The Han Dynasty broadened the scope of choosing talents from the grassroots according to moral integrity and professional competence criteria, making it the most significant way for people to become officials. The *chaju* system gave rise to China's systematic mechanism of selecting talents and had a tremendous impact on future generations.

In the first year of the Jianyuan era (140 BC), Counselor-in-chief Wei Wan submitted a memorial stating that "some people quoted Shen Buhai, Shang Yang, Han Fei, Su Qin, and Zhang Yi to confuse people in the court" and requested that "they be dismissed." Emperor Wu approved the memorial and started the tradition of "proscribing all non-Confucian schools of thought and espousing the Six Confucian Classics" and unifying the people's thinking with Confucianism. In addition, Emperor Wu adopted Dong Zhongshu's suggestion to establish *Taixue* (Imperial Academy) "with learned teachers to cultivate scholars throughout the country" to train and reserve talents for the empire. Meanwhile, he also created the positions of Erudites of the Five Classics to promote Confucian education and enhance the status of Confucianism in official academies. Such measures caused Confucianism to penetrate various fields and become the guiding ideology for imperial governance. By then, Confucianism had become the orthodox thought of all dynasties, providing the ideological basis for maintaining the feudal autocratic rule.

The Emperor Wu's reign also saw breakthroughs in papermaking technology. In 1957, some ancient paper scraps were unearthed in the tomb of the Western Han Dynasty in Baqiao at the eastern suburb of Xi'an. They were identified as jute paper, and the date was estimated to be no later than the fifth year of the Yuanshou era (118 BC). It shows that papermaking already appeared in China during the Western Han

Dynasty. Cai Lun in the Eastern Han Dynasty improved and promoted papermaking. Using raw materials, such as bark, hemp bits, old rags, and fishnets he enhanced the quality of paper through the techniques of rubbing, pounding, frying, and baking. Because it was inexpensive, this fine-quality paper was gradually used universally. Later generations called it “Marquis Cai Paper” to commemorate Cai Lun for his achievement. Papermaking steadily developed into an independent handicraft and is known as one of the Four Great Inventions of ancient China.

4.3 Zhang Qian’s Journey to the Western Regions

In the third year of the Jian’an era (138 BC), an official from the Han court set out on a journey to the Western Regions. He was Zhang Qian, a native of Chenggu (today’s Chenggu County) in southern Shaanxi Province. According to the *Records of the Grand Historian*, he was a dauntless, open-minded man acting in good faith. Emperor Wu wanted to build a military alliance with Great Yuezhi to attack the Xiongnu from both sides. He tried to recruit envoys to be dispatched to Great Yuezhi, and Zhang Qian applied and was enlisted.

Zhan Qian led an entourage of over a hundred people and left Longxi (today’s Lintao, Gansu Province). They were crossing the Hexi Corridor when the Xiongnu cavalry captured them. The Chanyu (title of supreme leader) of the Xiongnu tried to draw Zhang Qian to his side instead of visiting Yuezhi as an envoy. Therefore, he tried everything he could to lure him, including getting him a Xiongnu wife. Though a husband and father, Zhang Qian never forgot his mission. Instead, he held fast to his determination to go to Great Yuezhi. He and his party had to stay with the Xiongnu for over a decade.

One day in the sixth year of the Yuanguang era (129 BC), Zhang Qian acted decisively. He escaped with his entourage when the Xiongnu let down their guard. He sneaked out of the Chanyu’s court and left his wife and two children behind. But what Zhang Qian did not expect was that the situation in the Western Regions had changed a lot during his stay with the Xiongnu. With the Xiongnu’s support and instigation, Wusun had attacked the Yuezhi in the west, forcing them to move westward from the Ili River basin into the Guishui area near the Aral Sea. The Yuezhi people had conquered Daxia and built their homes on the new land there. After learning about the situation, Zhang Qian turned southwest, entered Yanqi (Karasahr), followed the Tarim River westward, passed Kuqa and Shule, crossed the Pamir Mountains, and reached Dayuan (the Fergana Valley). After his arrival, Zhang Qian told the Dayuan king about his mission as an envoy to Yuezhi and the various encounters along the way. He hoped that Dayuan could send someone to escort him and said that if he could return to his home country safely, he would explain everything to the Han emperor, who would reward Dayuan heavily. The king of Dayuan had initially wanted to have a diplomatic relationship with the Han Dynasty but could not do so due to the Xiongnu’s obstruction. The unexpected arrival of the Han envoy delighted him, so he granted Zhang Qian’s request. Escorted by his army, Zhang Qian came to Kangju

(an ancient kingdom in today's territories of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). From there, he went to Daxia in the Amu Darya River basin and finally arrived in Great Yuezhi. The journey to Great Yuezhi took him more than a decade. But Great Yuezhi flatly refused his proposal to jointly attack the Xiongnu on the excuse that the Han and Yuezhi were too far away to aid each other in case of grave danger. Zhang Qian and his entourage lingered in Yuezhi for over a year but never succeeded in persuading Yuezhi to ally with the Han Dynasty. He had to leave for the Han in the first year of the Yuanshuo era (128 BC).

Unfortunately, Zhang Qian ran into the Xiongnu cavalry again on his way home. The Xiongnu captured and detained him for over a year. An internal rift hit the Xiongnu at the beginning of the third year of the Yuanshuo era (126 BC). Zhang Qian took advantage of the turmoil to run away and returned to the Han. He briefed Emperor Wu on the situation in the Western Regions in detail, and the emperor promoted him to the position of *Taizhong Dafu* (Superior Grand Master of the Palace) and granted him the title of Marquis of Bowang. It was Zhang Qian's first journey to the Western Regions and lasted 13 years, from the second year of the Jianyuan era (136 BC) of Emperor Wu to the third year of the Yuanshuo era (126 BC).

Zhang Qian's mission to the Western Regions was originally to implement the strategy of Emperor Wu of Han to fight against the Xiongnu jointly with Great Yuezhi. Although he failed to achieve the goal, he gained a more detailed understanding of the Western Regions' geography, natural resources, customs, and habits. It provided valuable information for the Han Dynasty to open a vital traffic artery leading to Central Asia, thus laying the foundation for Zhang Qian's second mission.

In the fourth year of the Yuanshou era (119 BC), Zhang Qian journeyed to the Western Regions again per Emperor Wu's order. He arrived in Wusun with an entourage of 300 people, 10,000 sheep and cows, and tons of gold cloth and other goods. But he failed to talk the king of Wusun into relocating his people east. He then dispatched his deputy envoys to Dayuan, Kangju, Yuezhi, and Daxia. After returning to the Han in the second year of the Yuanding era (115 BC), he was appointed as the Chamberlain for Dependencies, known as *Daxingling*. He passed away the following year. The relationship between the Han Dynasty and the Western Regions developed further after his death. The Han Dynasty sent envoys to Anxi (Parthia), Shendu (India), Yancai (between the Aral Sea and the Caspian Sea), Tiaozhi (the vassal state of Anxi), Lixuan (the Egyptian city of Alexandria attached to Daqin, the ancient Chinese name for the Roman Empire), and other countries. Envoys from Anxi and other countries also came to Chang'an to visit and trade. From then on, communication between the Han Dynasty and the Western Regions was established.

Emperor Wu of Han established the post of *Shizhe Xiaowei* (Commandant of Imperial Envoys) in the Western Regions in the fourth year of Taichu era. The office was in Wulei (close to today's Xiaoyeyungou Village northeast of Luntai County, Xinjiang). He also dispatched people to garrison and cultivate the land in Quli (west of today's Yuli County). In the second year of Shenjue era (60 BC), Emperor Xuan of Han established the Protectorate of the Western Regions and also placed the office in the city of Wulei. The establishment of an administrative agency provided a guarantee for the Silk Road's accessibility.

The Han Dynasty's pursuit of connectivity with the Western Regions was initially out of military intent, but the access to them went far beyond military purposes. From Dunhuang out of Yumen Pass into Xinjiang, then from Xinjiang towards Central Asia and West Asia, a passage traversed east and west unobstructedly and became the "Silk Road" well-known to the later generations. By linking them together, the "Silk Road" promoted political, economic, and cultural exchanges between the Western Han Dynasty and many countries in Central Asia. Over a dozen plants from the Western Regions, such as walnuts, flax, grapes, pomegranates, broad beans, and alfalfa, were gradually promoted in the Central Plains. Kucha's music and *huqin* (a bowed, string instrument) were introduced to the Central Plains successively, enriching the Han people's cultural life. The well-sinking technology used by the Han army stationed in Shanshan and Jushi, Xinjiang, to open up wastelands became popular in the local area. The method was called the qanat, a system for transporting water from an aquifer or well to the surface. At that time, the region between western Dayuan and the Anxi kingdom did not produce silk. Neither did people there know how to cast iron or manufacture lacquerware. Later, envoys and soldiers of the Han Dynasty brought the techniques over. The spread of Chinese sericulture and iron smelting technique to the west tremendously contributed to the exchange between human civilizations.

Zhang Qian's journey to the Western Regions was not only a challenging and dangerous diplomatic mission but also a fruitful scientific expedition. After Zhang Qian returned to Chang'an, he presented Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty a detailed report, of which the main contents have been preserved in the *Records of the Grand Historian*. It has been the first comprehensive and reliable record of the Western Regions in China and the world and the most precious resource for studying the paleogeography and history of the region and its countries. Therefore, the Zhang Qian's mission to the Western Regions has special historical significance (Fig. 4.2).

4.4 The Guangwu Restoration

At the end of the Western Han Dynasty, social contradictions were unprecedentedly intensified, plunging the society into turbulence. Wang Mang, a consort relative, took the opportunity to replace the Han Dynasty with the Xin Dynasty. Wang Mang carried out a series of reforms to ease the social conflict, but none was successful. The Lülin and Chimei rebellions broke out at the end of the Xin Dynasty. Various feudal warlords rose at once, bringing tremendous disorder to China. In the third year of the Dihuang era (22 CE), Liu Xiu revolted against Wang Mang and proclaimed himself the emperor south of Hao (today's Bai Township, Hebei) in the third year of the Gengshi era (25 CE). He kept Han as the title of the dynasty and named his reign Jianwu. He was Emperor Guangwu.

Liu Xiu was the sixth-generation grandson of Liu Fa, King Ding of Changsha, who was the son of Emperor Jing of the Han Dynasty. He was a native of Caiyang County, Nanyang Commandery (southwest of today's Zaoyang City, Hubei). Rising



Fig. 4.2 Dunhuang Caves fresco, “Zhang Qian Visiting the West Regions as Envoy” (on the west of the north wall in Cave 323, Dunhuang Mogao Caves)

from chaotic times, he understood that “people under Heaven are tired and need rehabilitation.” Therefore, after reunifying the country, he took many measures to ease the political and social crises accumulated at the end of the Western Han Dynasty.

Liu Xiu solidified centralism in the government, reducing the actual powers of founding heroes and employing scholar-officials. The placement of founding heroes had always been challenging for the rulers of all dynasties. Learning from lessons of previous generations of rulers, Guangwu Emperor lavished perks and privileges on the heroic generals. But he moved them out of the state power center so that they could no longer participate in state governance, with Deng Yu, Li Tong, and Jia Fu as exceptions. This act prevented the founding heroes from having too much power. The employment of scholar-officials, however, could attract outstanding talents, which was conducive to monarchical dictatorship and centralized maneuvering of the ministers. It expanded and maintained the emperor’s authority. Emperor Guangwu placed the executive power in the hands of a secretariat he established. He named the position Shangshutai (Imperial Secretariat), which would present all the government decrees to the emperor for approval. “Despite the presence of Three Dukes, everything was under the Imperial Secretariat Director’s control.” It meant the imperial power was unprecedentedly consolidated. These measures constituted a system centered on civil servants, which had a far-reaching influence on later generations. However, according to historical records, Emperor Guangwu might rule the country in “a soft

way,” but he managed the officialdom with an iron fist, “governing relentlessly.” Whether a secretary in power or a duke in a nominal position, he would have been severely punished if he had made a mistake or displeased the emperor. Most of the officials selected by the imperial court to govern the people were also harsh.

Emperor Guangwu reorganized the local governments by disbanding each commandery’s local militia and dismissing its defender’s position. He transferred his authority to the commandery’s governor. The local defense task was to be carried out by the recruited professional troops, who were also charged with wasteland reclamation. In the sixth year of Jianwu era (30 CE), Emperor Guangwu ordered that the administration be simplified and that the number of officials be cut. Over 400 county-level administrative agencies were merged, downsizing the local officials by 90%. These measures saved the government an astonishing amount of revenue.

Governing the country in “a soft way” included reducing taxes, being easy on law enforcement, restraining military actions while encouraging art and literary activities, discouraging winning military honor at frontiers, and letting people recover from the previous upheaval. Emperor Guangwu adopted a policy of developing the economy and increasing the population in light of the situation where production had shrunk and the population had decreased. First, he reduced taxes. In the sixth year of the Jianwu era, Guangwu Emperor issued an imperial edict to restore the early Western Han’s tax system, according to which peasants only had to pay one-thirtieth of his annual yield to the empire. Second, the emperor issued two edicts successively to reduce sentences and pardon convicts. Third, he emancipated enslaved people. Emperor Guangwu once ordered that the maidservants be freed. He stipulated that the crime of killing them be not commutable, the act of scorching them be punishable as a crime, and the maidservants receiving burns be sent away as ordinary people. He annulled the law that a maidservant who shot and injured someone should receive capital punishment. In addition, Emperor Guangwu also advocated stopping military actions, encouraging scholarship, and discouraging coveting military honors at frontiers. After suppressing a rebellion in part of Sichuan, Emperor Guangwu never mentioned military actions. He governed the border regions with virtue, adopting the policies of friendship, self-rule, and mutual help. In the 21st year of the Jianwu era (45 CE), sixteen states and kingdoms in the Western Regions, including Shanshan and Jushi, “dispatched their princes to serve and accompany the emperor and asked him to send protectors to their kingdoms.” However, Emperor Guangwu responded, “China had just been stabilized, so it doesn’t want to touch on foreign affairs.” Therefore, “he sent the princes back with generous rewards.” In the 27th year of the Jianwu era (51 CE), Zang Gong, Marquis of Langling, and Ma Wu, Marquis of Yangxu, both had been officials of merit, jointly submitted a memorial to Emperor Guangwu. They asked him to send troops to conquer Northern Xiongnu while they were split and weakened so that he could “have his feast carved on a stele to let the future generations know about it.” However, Emperor Guangwu rejected their request. On the contrary, he issued an imperial edict to recover from social upheaval and restore production, giving the people a reprieve.

Economically, the Eastern Han Dynasty implemented a system of “measuring farmland.” The Eastern Han regime was established with the support of the powerful

landlords. However, their rise intensified land annexation, threatening imperial rule and affecting people's lives. To effectively maintain the autocratic monarchy, control the vast territory, and expand the fiscal revenue, the Eastern Han government had to know how much land and registered households it had as accurately as possible. To strengthen the imperial court's control over the land reclamation and the working population across the country and to average the burden of taxes, corvée, and labor, Emperor Guangwu issued an imperial edict in the 15th year of the Jianwu era (39 CE). The decree read, "The prefectures and commanderies must measure the farmland, check registered households, and investigate cases of officials with a 2000-*dan* salary to see if they have bent the law for their benefits in this regard." The verification of registered households would help correct errors that might occur in land reclamation, census, and tax collection. The edict met the landlords' uncompromising resistance and even revolts, which were eventually quelled. The land annexation problem that had plagued the Western and Eastern Han dynasties was finally resolved to some extent. According to the *Records of the Grand Historian*, animal husbandry flourished after the suppression of the rebellions, and people did not have to close their doors while sleeping. In a word, social tranquility reigned. Measuring farmland became an institutional system of the Eastern Han Dynasty, solidifying the dynasty's control of land and population. In 1989, two wooden slips were unearthed from the Eastern Han tomb in Hantanpo, Wuwei City, Gansu Province. Explicitly dated the 19th year of the Jianwu era (43 CE), the wooden slips record the system of measuring farmland and the request that grassroots officials check the amount of farmland in the fifth lunar month yearly. It also says that anyone who concealed more than three *mu* of land would be punished. It details how farmland was measured at that time.

Culturally, Emperor Guangwu inherited the Western Han Dynasty's tradition of promoting the study of classics. On the one hand, he had the *Taixue* (Imperial Academy) and the erudite profession established. He also encouraged each family to teach their children Confucian classics. On the other hand, he respected Confucius and promoted Confucianism. He granted Confucius's descendant Kong Zhi the title of Marquis of Baocheng. While supporting Confucianism, the emperor also vigorously praised integrity, commending those who had chosen to live like hermits and vowed not to serve in government offices during the Wan Mang's Xin Dynasty. The emperor complimented them for their loyalty to the Han house. He tried to enlist their service with courtesy, attempting to revive a social custom of respecting reputation and moral integrity. As a result, Eastern Han Dynasty was praised by later historians as the era with "the most beautiful social habits and the most enthusiasm in studying Confucian classics." (Fig. 4.3).

Sima Guang, a politician and historian of the Song Dynasty, accurately described Liu Xiu's "restoration" achievements: "He stopped military actions, encouraged art and literature, advocated virtues, rewarded merit, rehabilitated the commons, promoted rites and music, educated the people, commended acts of righteousness, and encouraged good customs. Then, great order and prosperity ensued, and the dynasty tried to keep what they had gained so that it would not lose it again. As a result, the Eastern Han's customs of loyalty, faithfulness, integrity, and shame benefited three generations." This passage comprehensively summarizes the historical

Fig. 4.3 Portrait of Liu Xiu, Emperor Guangwu of Han



achievements of Liu Xiu, Emperor Guangwu, and his successors, Emperor Ming and Emperor Zhang.

4.5 History and Chinese Classical Studies

China has a long tradition of history study, ranging from Confucius's revision of *Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Zuo Zhuan* (The Commentary of Zuo), *Guoyu* (Discourses of the States), and *Zhan Guo Ce* (Strategies of the Warring States) to *Shiji* (Records of the Grand Historian), *Han Shu* (Book of Han), *Shitong* (Generality of Historiography), and *Zizhi Tongjian* (Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance). Generation after generation of historians has left precious historical records on a large scale and in a large number. They constitute a magnificent treasure house in the history of the Chinese civilization.

History

The most representative history works of the Western and Eastern Han dynasties are the *Records of the Grand Historian* and the *Book of Han*.

In the second year of the Tianhan era (99 BC), Sima Qian defended Li Ling, who had surrendered to the Xiongnu, thus angering Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty. After being castrated as a penalty, Sima Qian initially wanted to commit suicide. However, considering his father's last wish and the years of hard work he devoted

himself to, Sima Qian decided to swallow the humiliation. He resumed his writing of the book, initially titled *Taishi Gong Shu* but later changed to *Shiji*, translated into English as the *Records of the Grand Historian*.

The *Records of the Grand Historian* is the first general history of the biographic-thematic style in ancient China. It records a history of more than 3000 years from the time of the Huangdi (Yellow Emperor) era in ancient legends to Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty. The book comprises 12 “*Benji* (Basic Annals),” i.e. words and deeds of all the monarchs; 30 “*Shijia* (Hereditary Houses),” i.e. rise and fall of vassals, heroes, and dignitaries; 70 “*Liezhuan* (Ranked Biographies),” i.e. words and deeds of influential people, with the last essay being the author’s self-introduction; ten “*Biao* (Tables),” i.e. chronological and genealogical tables; and eight “*Shu* (Treatises),” i.e. various ancient decrees and regulations. Altogether, the book contains 130 chapters of over 520,000 characters.

The *Records of the Grand Historian* is huge in scale and complete in system. It tops the Twenty-Four Histories and has profoundly impacted the development of later history and literature. Its innovative biographic- thematic style became a model for writing history and was inherited by later historians of official histories. The *Records of the Grand Historian* enjoys such a high place in Chinese literature and history that Lu Xun called it “the best work of all historians and unrhymed *Li Sao* (*Encountering Sorrow*),” which shows that it has tremendous literary value.

The *Book of Han*, also known as the *Book of Former Han*, is China’s first history book in the biographic-thematic and dynastic style. One of the Twenty-Four Histories, the book was mainly compiled by Ban Gu, a historian of the Eastern Han Dynasty, who had spent over two decades working on it. Ban Gu’s younger sister, Ban Zhao, added the eight tables to the book, and “*Tianwen Zhi* (*Discussion on Astronomy*),” a sequel to the *Book of Han*, was authored by Ma Xu, one of Ban Gu’s disciples. The *Book of Han* is another significant history book after the *Records of the Grand Historian* in ancient China. It is listed with the *Records of the Grand Historian*, the *Book of Later Han*, and the *Records of the Three Kingdoms* as one of the “Former Four Histories.” The *Book of Han* covers 229 years of history, from the first year of Emperor Gaozu of Han’s reign (206 BC) to the fourth year of the Dihuang era of Wang Mang’s Xin Dynasty (23 CE). It includes 12 “*Ji* (Annals),” eight “*Biao* (Tables),” ten “*Zhi* (Treatise),” and 70 “*Zhuan* (Biographies),” a total of 100 chapters (divided into 120 chapters by later historians) of 800,000 characters.

The history recorded in the *Book of Han* overlaps some of the historical periods documented in the *Records of the Grand Historian*. Both books record what happened before the middle period of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty. The former often takes some of the historical descriptions of this period from the latter with appropriate additions and omissions. The *Book of Han* added the treatises on “*Xingfa* (Law and Punishment),” “*Wuxing* (Five Phases),” “*Dili* (Geography),” and “*Yiwen* (Literature),” which are absent from the *Records of the Grand Historians*. The *Treatise on Law and Punishment* systematically documents the evolution of the legal system and some specific laws and regulations. The *Treatise on Five Phases* keeps records of natural disasters like earthquakes and solar and lunar eclipses, making it crucial reference material for studying the history of natural science in ancient China. The *Treatise on*

Geography describes administrative divisions and their historical evolution, figures of registered households, products indigenous to various places, economic development, and folk customs. The *Treatise on Literature* verifies the origins of different academic schools and records existent books, thus being the earliest library catalog in China that has survived. The “*Baiguan Gongqing Biao (Table of the Lords and Ministers in the Hundred Offices)*” is particularly noteworthy.

Chinese Classic Studies

Chinese Classics refers to the Confucian classics. The Chinese Classics Study originated in the Western Han Dynasty. Qin Shi Huang’s policy of burning books and burying scholars and Xiang Yu’s torching of Xianyang after Qin’s fall eliminated many pre-Qin classics, dealing a devastating blow to Confucian classics. Emperor Hui of Han abolished Qin’s law that banned the private collection of books. Some privately collected rare books appeared successively, and the study of Confucianism started to revive. In the fifth year of the Jianyuan era (136 BC), erudite positions were set up to cover the classics of *I-Ching (Book of Changes)*, *Shang Shu (Book of Documents)*, *Shijing (Book of Songs)*, *Liji (Book of Rites)*, and *Chunqiu (Spring and Autumn Annals)*. A certain number of erudites were assigned to study each of the classics with their disciples. The erudites and disciples fell into several schools of thought. Later, to adapt to the political situation of the grand unification and strengthen centralism, Dong Zhongshu suggested to Emperor Wu that he “proscribe all non- Confucian schools of thought and espouse the Six Confucian Classics.” From then on, Confucianism became China’s official orthodox thought.

Chinese Classic Studies was the most flourishing in the Han Dynasty. It is divided into New Text Classic Studies and Old Text Classic Studies, with their difference in the style of a set of characters. The New Text Classics were written in the Clerical script. People were encouraged to donate their collected books in the early Han Dynasty. Some aged learned scholars wrote down what they could remember of the burned classics in the popular Clerical script, and the books produced this way were known as the New Text Classics. New Text Classic Studies paid attention to the contemporary political situation. They believed in the harmony between man and nature, the *yin-yang* and five phases, and Heaven’s warning of monarchs with disasters. They were dedicated to discovering and developing the subtle meanings and absolute truths between the lines of the classics. They respected Confucius, calling him the “non- monarchal king” who had carried out institutional reforms with ancient classics. The New Text Classic Studies attached great importance to the study of *Gongyang Zhuan (Gongyang Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals)*. Among these scholars, Dong Zhongshu stood out as the most influential and accomplished. He was revered because he provided a theoretical basis for Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty to establish a unified, centralized empire under absolute monarchy. In the late Western Han Dynasty, a school of *chenwei* theology became popular. Its leading ideology and theoretical basis were the views of unusual natural disasters, signs of monarchal mandate, and mutual correspondence between Heaven and man. In essence, it can be regarded as a derivative form of New Text Classic Studies, with the Gongyang studies as the core. As the Eastern Han rulers believed

in and worshiped *chenwei*, it was regarded as the “secret classics” known as *Neixue* (Inner Studies). Its authoritativeness surpassed the Five Classics, and it became a fashion for scholars of New Text Classic Studies to study *chenwei* simultaneously.

The classics written with characters used during and before the Warring States period were called the Old Text Classics. They were most discovered from private collections in the early and mid-Western Han Dynasty. The Old and New Text Classic Studies differ not only in the forms of characters but also in their interpretation of the classics and study methods. According to those who studied the Old Text Classics, Confucius was but a compiler and preserver of ancient classics. He was an ancient sage who “only expounded the classics without writing them and believed in and was fond of the classics.” They believed that the Six Classics were records of ancient cultural rites and regulations and the political maxims of virtuous monarchs and ministers. Scholars of the Old Text Classics paid more attention to understanding the original meanings of the classics and expounding the decrees, regulations, and institutions contained therein. After coming to power, Wang Mang wanted to restructure the government with ancient institutions. Therefore, he gave his full support to Old Text Classics Studies. Wang Mang granted legal status to the *Commentary of Zuo*, the *Mao Commentary*, *Yili* (the lost texts of *Ceremonies and Rituals*, but the New Text Classic scholars denied their existence), the *Book of Documents* in the original text, and *Zhouli* (*Rites of Zhou*). He also set up the Old Text Classics erudite system, thus making Old Text Classics the orthodox doctrines. Encouraged by the monarch, the New Text Classic Studies with the Gongyang studies as the core took over the authoritative position during the Eastern Han Dynasty.

In the long-term debate, the Old and New Text Classic studies gradually infiltrated and merged with each other. At the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, Zheng Xuan, the master of the Old Text Classic Studies, delved into the meanings of the classics, commented on them, and created his school of thought by drawing on both the Old and New Text Classics, thus ending the dispute between the two studies. The classics Zheng Xuan commented on represented the highest achievements in the Han Dynasty’s academic research, profoundly influencing later classic studies.

Chapter 5

Wei-Jin-Northern and Southern Dynasties Civilization



Kai Liu

The Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern dynasties witnessed frequent regime changes and accelerated ethnic integration in Chinese history. It went through four stages: the Three Kingdoms period (220–280), the Western Jin Dynasty (265–316), the Eastern Jin Dynasty and the Sixteen Kingdoms period (317–420), and the Northern and Southern dynasties (420–589). The entire era lasted nearly four centuries.

During this period, the grand unification was shattered. Wars never stopped, and the relationships between various classes, between scholars and the commons, and between different ethnic peoples were complicated and confusing. With the conflict, collision, and fusion of multiple cultures in turbulent times, the Chinese civilization advanced in twists and turns. China eventually returned to unity with its conflicting ethnic groups integrating with each other, and its institutions and intellectual culture drew on the characteristics of the times and ethnic groups. The cultures of “the Han and the surrounding ethnic tribes, once chaotically interacted with each other,” were blended into one. As the South and the North came together, a multi-ethnic country rose like a phoenix from the ashes. The magnificent integration of northern ethnic groups and the vigorous economic development of the south laid a solid foundation for the prosperity of the civilization in Sui and Tang dynasties.

5.1 The Nine-Rank System

When the Western Jin Dynasty was just founded, Sima Yan, Emperor Wu of the Western Jin, held a Heaven worshipping ceremony one day in the southern suburbs of the capital. Afterward, he ordered Minister Zheng Mo to ride back with him, saying

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X. Bu (ed.), *The History of Chinese Civilization*, China Insights,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7125-1_5

he would like to settle a matter which had been weighing on his mind. The founding monarch said meaningfully, “Do you know why I asked you to ride with me?” Zheng Mo said, “No.”

Sima Yan told him, “During the commandery evaluation, you and I were equally recommended. I’ve felt guilty, worrying I might blemish your integrity and spoil the fair evaluation standard.”

It turned out that when Sima Yan had still been one of the royal family’s descendants, he supported the idea that all the royal family’s children must be ranked according to the “nine-rank system.” At that time, the Sima clan was in power, and its political influence was unparalleled. Therefore, no one in its hometown, Wen County in Henei Commandery (today’s Henan Province), dared to be ranked equally with Sima Yan. The commandery’s responsible rectifier asked his counterpart in the prefecture for help. The final solution was that all the 12 commanderies’ rectifiers recommended Zheng Mo, giving him the same rank as Sima Yan.

Zheng Mo came from the Zheng clan in Xingyang, Henan Province. Its ancestors could be traced back to the State of Zheng, which King Xuan of Zhou enfeoffed. After the state’s demise, the clan’s descendants successively took its name as their family name. Zheng Dangshi, the Chamberlain for the National Treasury of the Western Zhou Dynasty, lived in Kaifeng County, Henan Commandery (present-day Xiangfu District, Kaifeng, Henan Province) and became the forefather of the Zheng clan in Xingyang. Talented people emerged from the family in large numbers, making it well-known at the time. The following dynasties boasted great talents from the Zheng clan: the famous father-and-son Confucianists Zheng Xing and Zheng Zhong in the Eastern Han Dynasty; the renowned ministers Zheng Hun and Zheng Tai during the Three Kingdoms period at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty; and Zheng Chong and Zheng Mao in the Cao Wei and Western Jin dynasties. By then, Zheng had become a reputed family well-versed in Confucianism. Therefore, Sima Yan was pleased to be ranked like Zheng Mo. Sima Yan was the son of Sima Zhao, known for his remarks-turned proverb, “Sima Zhao’s ill intent is known to all,” meaning “the villain’s ambition is evident.” At that time, Sima Zhao was already at the helm of the Cao Wei regime. After learning about his son’s evaluation result, he wrote to Zheng Mo’s father, Zheng Mao, saying, “I feel flattered and uneasy when I heard my humble son was listed among the virtuous people and be on par with your son.”

Everyone, be he the powerful monarch like Sima Zhao or the current emperor Sima Yan, attached great importance to the nine-rank system.

The *jiupin zhongzheng* (“nine-rank system”) was also known as the *jinpin guanren fa* (“nine-grade controller system”). When Cao Cao died of illness in 220, his son, Cao Pi, came to Luoyang from Yecheng (mainly in today’s Linzhang County, Handan City, Hebei Province) to succeed him as the Counselor-in-chief and the King of Wei. He was excited to ascend to the high position with supreme power suddenly. But he did not forget to take decisive actions to centralize the kingdom’s power and stabilize the political situation. Chen Qun, Minister of Appointments in charge of selecting officials, submitted a memorial asking him to implement the “nine-rank system.” He attempted to centralize official selection through the system. The previous Eastern Han Dynasty adopted a procedure of *xiangju lixuan* (“recommending candidates

from the townships and selecting them from villages”). Based on it, the Eastern Han Dynasty also adopted a *zhengbi* system (recruitment on imperial edict or invitation and election or appointment by prefecture and commandery governors). At the end of the Han Dynasty, when the warlords fought and the village organizations were destroyed, the traditional practice of *xiangju lixuan* did not work anymore. The *zhengbi* system, however, was prone to give rise to dual sovereign-courtier relationships: a prefecture or commandery governor might form a pseudo-sovereign-courtier relationship with his subordinates. Such a relationship was detrimental to the monarchal dictatorship. The “nine-rank system” would give the central government to sole right to select officials and consolidate Cao Pi’s control over the court. In October of the same year, Cao Pi established the Wei to replace the Han Dynasty, which shows that “nine-rank system” played a crucial role in founding the Cao Wei Dynasty and strengthening its centralism.

The *jiupin zhongzheng* (“nine-rank system”) was, in essence, a top-down and combined top-down and bottom-up system of selecting talents. It originated in the Cao Wei era and was gradually perfected in the Western Jin Dynasty. It went through some changes in the Northern and Southern dynasties. *Zhongzheng* (rectifier) was the title of the official in charge of the evaluation across the nation. Depending on the regional administrative hierarchy, the position was divided into senior and junior levels. A senior rectifier worked in a prefecture to evaluate its candidates, whereas a junior rectifier worked in a commandery. Senior rectifiers must be selected from among the central government officials of integrity and good reputation. Junior rectifiers could be recommended by senior rectifiers but must be appointed by the central government’s Minister of Education. After the rectifiers assumed the mandate, the central government distributed evaluation forms to them. The forms divided the candidate talents into three *deng*’s (classes): the upper, the middle, and the lower. Each *deng* was subdivided into three *pin*’s (grades): the upper, the middle, and the lower. So, the candidates were categorized into three *deng*s and nine-*pins*: upper-upper, upper-middle, upper-lower, middle-upper, middle-middle, middle-lower, lower-upper, lower-middle, and lower-lower. A rectifier evaluated candidate scholars from his native place, including those living in his prefecture or scattering in other prefectures. The evaluated candidates’ age, family’s social standings, character, and *pin* and *deng* were entered in the evaluation forms, along with the rectifiers’ comments.

A rectifier evaluated a candidate’s qualification in three steps: first and foremost was finding out his family’s social status, including his family background and origin. The rectifier must have detailed knowledge of the candidate’s father’s and grandfather’s official ranks and nobility titles. The second was assessing a candidate’s character and capability, usually in succinct comments. Take Sun Chu from the Western Jin Dynasty, for example. The evaluation comment he received from the prefecture’s senior rectifier was, “Talented, knowledgeable, outstanding, and superior to others.” Wang Jia, the senior rectifier from Fengxiang Prefecture, gave Ji Mao such an evaluation, “Excellent in moral strength but not capable.” The third was grading and classifying the candidates to determine their *deng-pin* (class-grade).

When the “nine-rank system” was first implemented, character, namely, virtue and ability, was the primary basis for determining a candidate’s classification. Family background was only for reference. In the Western Jin Dynasty, since all the rectifiers came from aristocratic families of influential clans, the criteria for the evaluation were based entirely on family background. Consequently, candidates from poor families could only get low grades even though their evaluation comments were very positive. On the contrary, candidates from rich and powerful families could always get high grades despite their poor character. In the end, a situation was created where “no people from poor families have high grades; no people from influential and privileged families have low grades.” Such a situation gave rise to the politics of *menfa shizu* (grand noble families and gentry clans).

After finishing their evaluations, the rectifiers submitted their results to the Ministry of Education for review. Then, the reviewed results were transferred to the Ministry of Personnel as the basis for hiring the candidates. The rectifier’s evaluation results were called *xiangpin* (local rank), closely related to the official career of those evaluated. Based on the local rank, the Ministry of Personnel determined where a candidate started his career, which was called *Qijiaguan* (initial appointment). The appointed official’s initial rank must match his local rank. Roughly speaking, there was usually a three to four rank difference between the local rank and an initial official rank. Take Shan Jian, for example. He was the son of one of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, and his local rank was three, while the rank of his first official position was seven. But this correspondence of ranks was not absolute.

The local rank had something to do with an appointed official’s “*qing* (limpid)” or “*zhuo* (turbid).” The initial appointment of a candidate with a high local rank had usually been a *qing* position. In the Wei and Jin dynasties, *Xuanxue* (Dark Learning or neo-Taoism) and *qingtan* (pure conversation), a philosophical movement belonging to *Xuanxue*, were very popular. People of that time referred to an official holding a high post as the “*qing* (limpid) official,” which fell into two categories. One included very high-ranking officials of importance, such as *Shanshu* (Imperial Secretary) and *Zhongshu* (Palace Secretary). The other included officials of pretty high ranks with a light workload, such as *Mishulang* (Assistant in the Palace Library) and *Cheng* (Aide). The corresponding “*zhuo* (turbid) official” indicates the positions of officials with lower ranks but complicated office work that candidates from influential families loathed to assume. The initial appointment of a candidate with a low ranking usually had a *zhuo* (turbid) position.

Rectifiers who evaluated candidates were adjusted once every three years. But the rectifiers could also upgrade or downgrade a candidate at any time. Generally, an official with his local rank demoted would see his *qing* (limpid) or *zhuo* (turbid) status change accordingly. However, the government would hold any rectifiers accountable if they violated the law in their grading.

The initial implementation of the “nine-rank system” ensured a centralized objective standard for selecting officials. When rectifiers evaluated their candidates, they still adopted the method of *xianglun* (popular opinion), which meant that they would listen to public views and integrate them into their evaluation of their candidates.

This method was a legacy of the Han Dynasty's tradition of "recommending candidates among the townships and villages." But putting the official selection under the central government's control reinforced its centralism. Nevertheless, the regimes of the Wei-Jin period represented the interests of the aristocratic families of large clans. Belonging to the same social class, the rulers would try to guarantee the families' political interests. In the late phase of its implementation, the "nine-rank system" completed the transition to serving the *menfa* (old families of hereditary power and influence) and became its tool for selecting officials. Eventually, the system went so far that it stood on the opposite side of the centralized government. The Eastern Jin Dynasty was typical of *menfa* politics. The monarch's and central government's power was weakened, so much so that "the king and horses share the world under Heaven." In the Sui Dynasty, the "nine-rank system" gave way to the *keju* (imperial examination) system as the *menfa* system went downhill.

5.2 Wei-Jin's Charming Manners

One summer day in 263, the scorching sun hung above the execution ground at the horse market east of Luoyang. Amid cicada chirpings, the Luoyang residents turned out to see off Ji Kang in tremendous sorrow. Earlier that day, 3000 students from the highest academy sent a joint petition to the government, asking for Ji Kang's employment as a teacher at the academy. They hoped it would soften the heart of Sima Zhao, a powerful minister of the Cao Wei regime, making him value the talent of a famous intellectual like Ji Kang and spare his life. Sima Zhao's decision did not surprise them: he rejected their appeal. Complying with Zhong Hui's suggestion, he had Ji Kang beheaded.

Zhong Hui used to respect Ji Kang very much and even to the extent of holding him in awe and reverence. When he finished his *Siben Lun* (*Treatise on the Four Basic Relations between National Ability and Human Nature*), Zhong Hui wanted Ji Kang to go over it. But, despite being Zhong Yao's son, Zhong Hui still did not have enough courage to see Ji Kang. Instead, he stealthily inserted the manuscript under the window of Ji Kang's house. Zhong Hui was now a high-ranking official heavily favored by Sima Zhao. One day, after learning that Ji Kang was striking iron at an ironsmith workshop outside Luoyang, he went to see him in his magnificent chariot with a large entourage of friends and guests (Fig. 5.1).

Ji Kang ignored this court favorite and kept hammering the iron while asking Xiang Xiu to work on the bellows. Neither Ji Kang nor Zhong Hui said anything, but only the hammer and the iron were clanking. Embarrassed, Zhong Hui had to leave in dismay. He had just turned to set out when he heard Ji Kang say, "What did you hear that made you come? What did you see that made you leave?" Surprised, Zhong Hui responded hurriedly, "What I heard that made me come, and what I saw that made me leave." The dialog between the two neo-Taoists was like a duel between two kung fu masters. It was swift, and the winner was already decided. However,

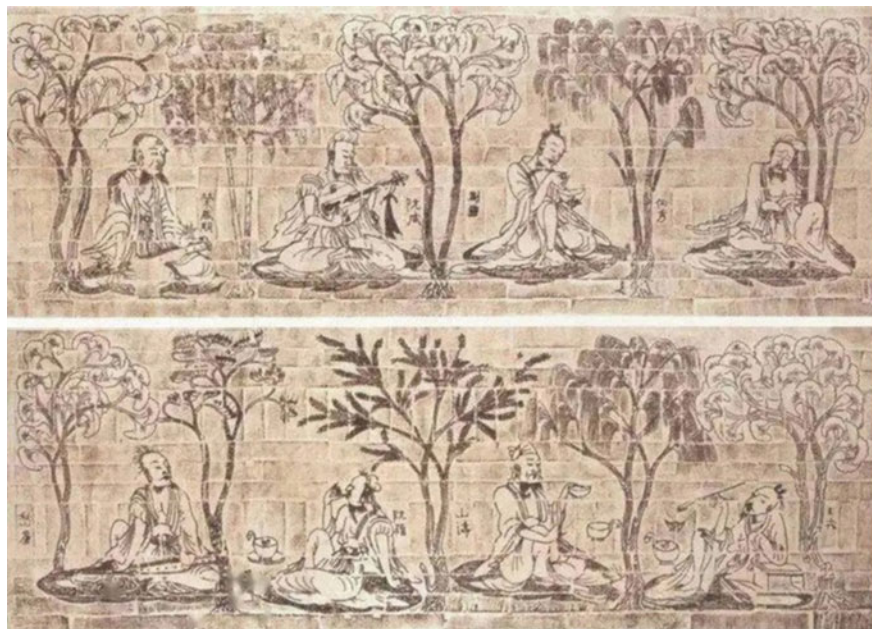


Fig. 5.1 Brick carving portraying the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and Rong Qiqi

the brief and quick-witted conversation had hardly concealed Zhong Hui's seething anger. He masterminded Ji Kang's death.

On the execution platform, Ji Kang was composed. What was on his mind were regrets, not about the ending of his beautiful life but the loss of a splendid piece of music forever. When he had put up for the night in the Huayang Pavilion, a mysterious passer-by taught him a *guqin* tune, *Guangling San* (*Melody of Guangling*), and asked him to keep it to himself. He looked at the shadow cast by the sun and found he still had some time before the execution. He asked for a *guqin* and started playing it before the weeping scholars. The forceful tune radiated out to fill the air. After he finished, Ji Kang sighed with eternal regret, "*Guangling San* will be gone with me forever."

In 1927, over a thousand and six hundred years later, Lu Xun gave an academic speech titled "Wei-Jin's Charming Manners and the Relationship between Medicine and Alcohol." In it, he put forward the term "Wei-Jin's Charming Manners" for the first time in Chinese history. He used the words to refer to the elegant manners of the literary celebrities represented by Ji Kang.

Before the "Wei-Jin's Charming Manners," there had been the "Jian'an Fenggu," a literary style represented by the Three Cao's, i.e. Cao Cao, Cao Pi, and Cao Zhi, and the "Seven Masters," i.e. Kong Rong, Chen Lin, Wang Can, Xu Gan, Ruan Yu, Ying Yang, and Liu Zhen. They inherited the realistic tradition of the Yuefu poetry of the Han Dynasty. Their literary works depicted the turmoil of contemporary society where the people were suffering and expressed their aspirations for doing deeds of merit and striving competitively forward in their careers through vigorous and

sorrowful five-character and seven-character verses. Cao Cao's *Duangxing* (*Short Song*) and *Guan Canghai* (*Viewing the Deep Blue Sea*) are profound and vibrant. Cao Pi's poem, with *Yangxing* as its tune name, is the first seven-character verse recorded in Chinese history. And Cao Zhi's *Luoshen Fu* (*Ode to the Nymph of the Luo River*) depicted the unparalleled beauty of the goddess with concise language and deep feelings. The most accomplished of the "Seven Masters" was Wang Can, whose representative work is *Qi'ai Shi* (*Poems of Seven Sorrows*). It is a true portrayal of the turbulent war years at the end of the Han Dynasty.

At the end of the Cao Wei period, *Xuanxue* (Dark Learning or neo- Taoism) rose with the fierce political struggle between the Cao and the Sima clans intensifying. The *Zhengshi Mingshi* (intellectual elites refusing to be officials during the Zhengshi era), represented by He Yan, founded *Xuanxue* with a thorough understanding of Confucianism. They used *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi*, and the *Book of Changes* as the framework. The cruelty of the political situation forced scholars to withdraw from reality to think about the universe and the origin of life and society. They aired their views by way of *qingtang* (pure conversation) about the opposite ideas of *ben* (essentials) and *mo* (nonessentials), *ti* (substance) and *yong* (function), and *mingjiao* (moral codes) and *ziran* (the natural tendencies of human beings). *Qingtang* worked like a forensic contest. It involved two parties, the host and the guest, who would exchange questions and upheld its own logic. It required language skills and attention to the content. The debaters must express profound meanings with fewer words.

The exciting anecdotes of *Xuanxue* debates were vividly described in *Shishuo Xinyu* (*A New Account of the Tales of the World*). It is a *biji* (note-form) novel authored by Liu Yiqing of the Southern Dynasty and annotated by Liu Xiaobiao of Liang in the same period. It records intellectual elites' words, deeds, and anecdotes in the Wei-Jin era. It consists of six volumes covering 36 categories of content, such as "Virtuous Conduct," "Speech and Conversation," "Affairs of State," "Letters and Scholarship," and "The Square and the Proper." There are many chapters under each category, totaling over 12,000.

A New Account of the Tales of the World involves more than 1500 characters. It outlines their personalities vividly through the unique way they spoke and behaved. A few words from each character gives a glimpse of the Wei-Jin intellectual elites' lifestyle and spirit, as well as their unrestrained *qingtang* performances. Lu Xun called it a "textbook about intellectual elites."

Xuanxue and *Qingtang* were not sober thinking about pure speculative philosophy but rather a helpless escape from the world when the intellectuals involved could not get what they wanted in their passionate pursuit of a rational society. The defiant and unrestrained Seven Sages of the Bamboo Forest, led by Ji Kang, chose to talk about Dark Learning and its doctrines in the grove, drinking cold wine and taking Five Minerals Powder. They were trying to be spiritually detached from the world under the political pressure of the turbulent years in the Wei-Jin period. The rubbing of a brick relief depicting the Seven Sages in the Bamboo Forest shows a person too many: Rong Qiqi, a hermit of the Spring and Autumn period. He was well-versed in music but politically unsuccessful. He often played his *guqin* and sang in the countryside in his late years. This kind of thinking and behavior was in line with the Seven Sages

of Bamboo Forest. The advocacy of Dark Learning and pure conversation happened to share the same philosophy as Ji Kang's slogan, "Transcend *mingjiao* and give free rein to *ziran*." By *mingjiao*, he suggested the Confucian ethical code of conduct, and by *ziran*, he meant the natural tendencies of human beings. The Sima clan, the founder of the Western Jin Dynasty, was the advocator of *mingjiao*.

As their effort to take power from the Cao Wei regime sped up, the Sima clan began to pardon intellectual elites and enlist their service. The situation lured many intellectuals involved with the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Forest away and back to their official positions in the court. Shan Tao, Minister of Personnel, was promoted and wanted his friend from the bamboo forest, Ji Kang, to take his place. But he unexpectedly received the *Letter of Severing the Relationship with Shan Tao* written in harsh terms.

What Ji Kang broke up with was not Shan Tao himself but the Sima political group represented by Shan Tao. Ji Kang's declaration in the letter, "I deny Shang Tang and King Wu of Zhou and despise Duke Zhou and Confucius," was more of a cry and struggle of the times. This slogan caused great trouble to Sima's intention to usurp Cao Wei's regime.

Ji Kang completely broke with those in power with his relation-severing letter. No one could hear the Seven Sages discussing the doctrines of Dark Learning while drinking in the bamboo forest by the foot of the Yuntai Mountain anymore. Audible only was Ji Kang striking iron or playing his *guqin* in solitude. Anyway, his presence had shamed the would-be usurper, Sima Zhao, into tossing and turning for many a sleepless night. Zhong Hui, who had had a grudge against Ji Kang and was subservient to Sima Zhao, involved Ji Kang in a case of two brothers and got him killed.

The intellectual elites of the Dark Learning in the Wei-Jin period set an example of not bowing to despotic power with their unique behavior. Ji Kang's charisma and character were passed on to posterity through the Wei-Jin Charming Manners and wrote a one-of-a-kind page in the history of Chinese spiritual civilization.

5.3 The Migration Wave and the Development of Jiangnan

On the third day of the third lunar month in the ninth year of the Yonghe era (353 CE), Jiangnan was covered with lush grass, wild trees, and various flowers, attracting orioles and other birds flying playfully above or among them. Wang Xizhi, a metropolitan governor of Kuaiji Prefecture (in today's Shaoxing City, Zhejiang Province), got together in the Lan Pavilion in Shanyin Mountain with 41 friends, including Xie An and Sun Chuo. They enjoyed drinking from cups floating on a winding brook while composing and chanting their poems. After the party, they compiled their poems in a book and asked Wang Xizhi, the best calligrapher of his time, to write a preface. *Lantingji Xu* (*Preface to the Poems Collected from Orchid Pavilion*) was thus born and known to the later generations as "The First Semi-cursive Script Calligraphic Work under Heaven." The birth of this preface was against the background of the

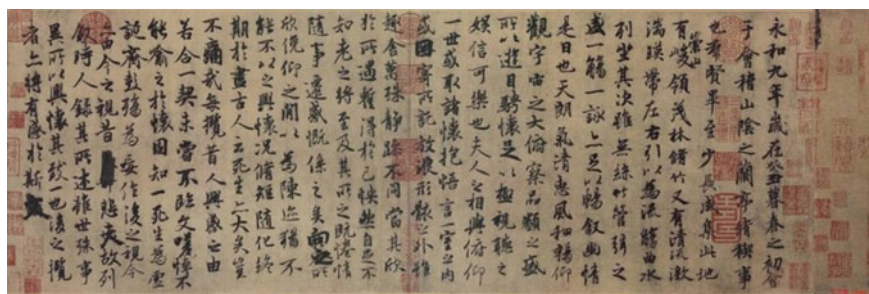


Fig. 5.2 *The Orchid Pavilion*, by Wang Xizhi

time when there was a migration wave, and Jiangnan was experiencing economic development (Fig. 5.2).

In its last years, the Western Jin Dynasty was hit by the Rebellion of the Eight Kings. Therefore, it was ravaged by a succession of wars. With the migration of the northern ethnic minorities to the Central Plains from the grasslands, many aristocrats and common people had to abandon their real properties to move south from Luoyang, Henan, and Langya, Shandong. They crossed the Yangtze River and swarmed into Jiangnan. Later historians called this phenomenon *yiguan-nandu* (literally “crowns and gowns crossing to the South”). Among the people crossing to the South were two significant leaders. One was Sima Rui, King of Langya, from the royal clan of the Western Jin Dynasty, and the other was the heavyweight aristocrat, Wang Dao, from an influential clan of the North. The two celebrities’ close collaboration helped establish the Eastern Jin Dynasty in Jiangnan, making it stand firm to rival the Sixteen Kingdoms of the five ethnic peoples as well as the Northern Dynasty.

The most urgent problem facing the northern intellectual elites who first arrived south of the Yangtze River was their livelihood. In the traditional agricultural society, the key to livelihood was land. The powerful and influential southern clans had occupied the vast fertile land south of the Yangtze River since the founding of Eastern Wu. Sima Rui, who had just crossed the river, was at a loss for what to do. He sighed, “I always feel ashamed being in a foreign land.” After thwarting several armed coups by the indigenous people in the South, the feudal families of many generations from the North requested to relate to the influential families in the South by marriage to ease the conflicts between them and reach agreements on key issues. The influential northern clans went south through Zhejiang in the east while “purchasing land and houses” to avoid head-on conflicts in economic interests with their local counterparts. They reclaimed land in the coastal area in Kuaiji (today’s Ningbo and Shaoxing) to develop agriculture and establish their sphere of influence.

The lush forests, fertile soil, and beautiful scenery in the Kuaiji area had attracted many expatriates from the North to make it their home. Wang Xizhi and Xie An typically represented them. They loved the landscape of East China, visiting Taoist temples in the mountains and angling by the ponds and streams. They often wrote prose and poetry, chanted together, and shared their aspirations. By recording

the event of drinking from cups floating on a winding stream, the *Preface to the Poems Collected from Orchid Pavilion* expressed the thoughts that “life depends on fortune and will eventually end.” Then, they took root in this land.

However, what supported the cultural activities that were intangible, tasteful, and transcending the worldly was land development and management based on building large-scale idyllic villas by closing mountains and occupying lakes. Not only did the influential northern families do this, but the southern ones were never tired of doing the same. They vied to recruit and organize labor to build villas in the south featuring all-round development and diversified operations by reclaiming land through burning plants in mountains, reclaiming wasteland, and enclosing lakes. They were engaged in growing cereal crops and vegetables, cultivating and planting perennials and fruit trees, and raising fowls, animals, fish, and shrimps. At the same time, they also developed textile, winemaking, utensil manufacturing, and even pharmaceutical industries, which were extensive and large-scale. Some products were for self-consumption and a large amount for sale on the market.

Commanderies and counties for migrants provided the institutional guarantee for the migration wave and economic development south of the Yangtze River. Those commanderies and counties were initially administrative divisions established to settle the displaced people from the North. To prevent acting against the interests of the southern clans of influence, the government set up special eponymous commanderies and counties, provided the settlers with separate household registration, and offered them tax preference. The commanderies and counties for migrants usually had the word “south” in their names to differentiate the north elite clans’ household registration from the previous one. For example, there was a Langya Commandery in the North, and the Eastern Jin Dynasty had a South Langya Commandery. Nearly a million people migrated south in about a hundred years until these designated commanderies and counties were abolished when the Sui Dynasty reunified China.

The migrants from the north brought not only a sufficient workforce but also the production technology of the Central Plains. The northern refugees, the indigenous southerners, and the minority ethnic Shanyue people worked together to preliminarily develop Jiangnan during the Sun Wu period. The end of the Western Jin Dynasty saw the rise of a vast migration wave. According to Ge Jianxiong, a Chinese historical geographer, the South had been home to at least two million northern migrants and their descendants by the Daming era of the Liu Song Dynasty (457–464), further developing the southern part of China. The expansion of farmland was more apparent, as evidenced by the northern aristocratic families’ efforts to exploit the mountains, forests, and rivers. In the Liu Song Dynasty, such a situation went as far as poorer people could not have enough firewood for cooking because the wealthy owned the forested mountains. The royal government had to issue an imperial edict to limit the area of mountains and lakes to be occupied or privatized.

The production technology and tools of the Central Plains spread to the South, where they were further improved through adaptation to the environment and people. Plowing with cows had become relatively universal in Jiangnan and Lingnan by the Liu Song Dynasty. The widespread use of iron farm tools and well-developed water conservation works effectively promoted the productivity, significantly increasing

the output of agricultural and associated products. The yield of rice, the primary cereal crop, was higher. Rice varieties had risen to over 30, and the growth cycle had been much shortened. Double-cropping rice appeared in the Jiaoguang (today's Guangzhou Province) in the Eastern Wu period, followed soon by three-cropping rice in the Jiangnan in the Eastern Jin Dynasty. Xiahou Kui built a dam in Yu Prefecture (today's part of Henan Province) to "irrigate a thousand *qing* of padded fields, resulting in an annual yield of over a million *dan* (1 *dan* equaled about 26.640 kg at the time) of rice." Converted to today's weights, it would be 10 *dan* per *mu* (6.66 acres). In Yuzhang Commandery, Jiang Prefecture (today's Jiujiang City, Jiangxi Province), rice was produced at 20 *dan* per *mu*. Where sericulture was concerned, the technology of low-temperature controlled silkworm egg hatching was applied to increase silkworm cocoon harvests. Harvesting four or five times a year was universal, and eight times was also possible.

Significant progress was also made in the handicraft industry. The brocade industry was thriving; celadon firing technology was gradually maturing; and the *guangang* (pouring pig iron liquid onto wrought iron) method, the outstanding achievement in iron smelting technology, appeared and was in use. The advance in papermaking was manifested in the addition of such new varieties as vine or mulberry bark paper and the acquisition and application of such new technologies of calendaring and coloring. They paved the way for paper to replace bamboo slips as the primary writing material.

With the blessing of agriculture and handicrafts, cities and commerce were also increasingly prosperous. The capital city Jiankang was not only a political and cultural center but also a big port on the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, where merchant and passenger ships were constantly coming and going. Shanyin was the center of rice and silk trading in the Liangzhe region (today's Zhejiang Province). The tax paid by traveling merchants alone reached more than four million taels of silver a year. Panyu of Nanhai Prefecture was a foreign trade center and a window from which the Liu Song Dynasty had frequent trade contacts with Persia, Tianzhu (India), and Simhaladvip (Sri Lanka). It imported ivory, rhinoceros horn, hawksbill turtle, colored-glaze ware, and other commodities and exported bulk cargoes of various silk fabrics.

Four centuries of development in the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties turned Jiangnan, the vast and sparsely populated backcountry into a prosperous land. It presented a scene of "houses and buildings standing row upon row and field ridges crisscrossing like the wefts and warps of a silk fabric." A basic economic zone in Jiangnan centered on the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River had taken shape. It marked a significant change in the regional distribution of ancient China's economy from northwest to southeast, laying the foundation for the gradual southward shift of the entire economic center since the Sui and Tang dynasties.

5.4 Emperor Xiaowen of Northern Wei's Institutional Reform and the Fusion of the Ethnic Peoples in the North

In the eighth lunar month of the 12th year of the Taihe era of the Northern Wei Dynasty (496), the summer heat was still lingering in Luoyang. The capital city had just seen Emperor Xiaowen leaving for the Songshan Mountain on an inspection tour and witnessed the crown prince Yuan Xun plotting with his attendants in the secretariat. The Northern Wei Dynasty had the convention that the mother had to die if her son was honored. When Yuan Xun became the heir apparent in the seventh year of the Taihe era, his mother, Li, was forced to commit suicide. His great-grandmother, Empress Dowager Feng, brought him up while overindulging him. Growing up in such an environment, Yuan Xun, who hated leaning when young, had a character of a bully. In the 18th year of the Taihe era, Emperor Xiaowen announced his plan to move the capital to Luoyang and soon afterward carried out the Sinicization reform.

The overweight Yuan Xun hated the summer heat of Luoyang. He always missed the old capitals Pingcheng and Shengle, where the land was expansive with a cooler temperature. He also detested the ritual and rites of the Central Plains. In secret, he tore the hats and clothes his father had given him to pieces. He also sneered at his father's advocacy of speaking Chinese and wearing Chinese apparel. He still wore his plaits and left-lapelled ethnic costume and raced his horse as if he had been on a prairie. He stubbornly stuck to the old Xianbei custom.

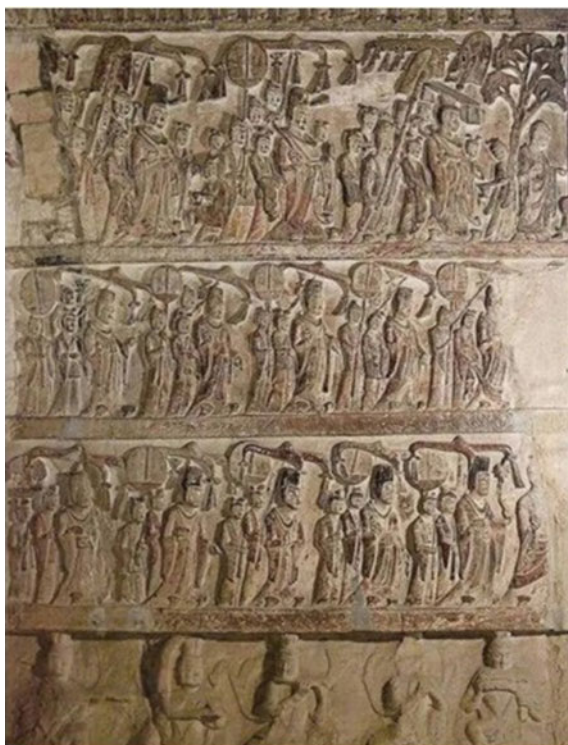
Gao Daoyue, Palace Cadet in Heir Apparent's Household, earnestly advised Yuan Xun to accept reality. However, Yuan Xun not only refused to mend his ways but also harbored hatred against Gao Daoyue. Therefore, he took Emperor Xiaowen's inspection tour as an opportunity to have a secret conference with his aides, selected three thousand royal horses, and planned to return to Pingcheng. He also killed Gao Daoyue with his own hands. Luckily, the commandant Yuan Yan acted quickly. He guarded the palace gate and thwarted his plot to flee to the north. After receiving a memorial about the failed coup, Emperor Xiaowen returned to Luoyang. In his wrath, he punished Yuan Xun by flogging him in person before banishing him from the royal family.

What led to the fallout between the father and the son was the reform initiated by Emperor Xiaowen. Emperor Xiaowen's institutional reform fell into three stages, from the death of Empress Dowager Feng in the year of the Taihe era to the move of the capital to Luoyang in the 18th year of the Taihe era (494) (Fig. 5.3).

The first stage was between Emperor Xiaowen's succession to the throne in the first year of the Yanxing era (471) and Empress Dowager Feng's death in the 14th year of the Taihe era. The leaders of the institutional reform were Empress Feng and Emperor Xiaowen. Five years after the young emperor sat on the throne, his father suddenly passed away. Empress Feng had to hold the court for the second time and issued measures of significant reforms in the name of Emperor Xiaowen.

In the eighth year of the Taihe era, Empress Feng issued the imperial edict to implement a system where salaries were paid to government officials. In the early years

Fig. 5.3 The emperor and empress paying tribute to the Buddha, Gongxian Caves in Henan



of the Northern Wei Dynasty, officials did not get paid. The Tuoba aristocrats could acquire wealth by looting or rendering outstanding military service during wartime. But other poor officials had to do all they could to find their gains by competing for benefits with the people, embezzling money, receiving bribes, or running their private businesses, thus corrupting the officialdom. The implementation of the salary system ensured officials' material benefits. At the same time, the court declared that any embezzlement or bribery of more than a bolt of silk or cloth fabric would be punished by death. The stringent law and punishment deterred the officials and improved their governance.

Officials' salaries ultimately came from the farmers, whose livelihood depended on the land. After the founding of the Northern Wei Dynasty, many ethnic minorities left as refugees for the Central Plains. And wars resulted in vast tracks of ownerless land for distribution. With the dynasty's stability and revenues in mind, the ruler of the Northern Wei issued a decree on land equalization in the ninth year of the Taihe era. It stipulated that land was granted to farmers based on the number of husbands and wives and their draft cows. The government would re-grant and register land regularly.

To effectively monitor the agricultural population after land equalization, the Northern Wei Dynasty established a three-leader system. Per the system, every five

households had a *lin* leader, every five *lin* had a *li* leader, and every five *li* had a *dang* leader. People of high esteem from the *xiang* (township) assumed the leaders' position. These *lin*, *li*, and *dang* were grassroots political organizations, replacing the original suzerainty supervision system controlling the grassroots communities.

The farmers with land and registered household status became the essential source of taxes. With this change, the *zutiao* system came into being, with *zu* meaning grain paid by adult men to the government and *tiao* meaning fabric paid by adult women. The *zu* and *tiao* quota was laid down. Generally speaking, the reduction of taxes alleviated the people's burden and tremendously promoted the farmers' initiative in labor.

Empress Dowager Feng died in the 14th year of the Taihe era, and the 24-year-old Emperor Xiaowen took over the reins of the government, thus lifting the curtain on the second stage of institutional reform. Emperor Xiaowen had "grown up in the palace and under the care of women." After shaking off the shackles of Empress Feng, he meant to make a fresh start and carry out a vigorous Sinicization reform. However, the conservative forces of the Tuoba aristocracy were so deeply rooted in Pingcheng that it was difficult for the reform to stay off the shadow of Empress Dowager Feng completely. So, the obstacles were many. Emperor Xiaowen could only start the reform by changing the system of rites. His foremost step was to enforce the sacrificial ceremonies practiced in the Central Plains. More notable changes included the construction of the Bright Hall, where ancient emperors publicly censored and educated people and held grand ceremonies. He also renovated the temple of the imperial ancestors and built the *wulu* ("five kinds of") chariots and horses of honor that only emperors could use.

After moving the capital to Luoyang in the 18th year of the Taihe era, Emperor Xiaowen freed himself from the conservative forces in Pingcheng. He accelerated and intensified the reform, making it more thorough than ever.

First, to create a new and stable ruling group after moving to Luoyang, Emperor Xiaowen identified and determined the names of the noblest and most eminent Xianbei ethnic group and Han clans. He also promoted intermarriage between the Xianbei and Han *menfa* families to further fuse the two ethnic peoples. He drafted rules to make the eight Xianbei clans with the names Mu, Lu, He, Liu, Lou, Yu, Ji, and Wei on the same par as the four Han clans, i.e. Cui, Lu, Zheng, and Wang. He stipulated that no low-ranking official positions should be assigned to any of them. Then, he tried actively to win over the Han *menfa* through intermarriage. Emperor Xiaowen himself married the daughter of Lu Min, a northern Han official from Hanyang Prefecture in today's Hebei Province. Then he took several concubines from Han *menfa* families: Cui from Qinghe, Zheng from Xingyang, Wang from Taiyuan, and Li from Longxi. He also got each of his five brothers a concubine from *menfa* families in the Central Plains. He encouraged intermarriage between the Xianbei and the Han peoples.

Second, he issued a decree to ban Xianbei etiquette and customs and replace them with those of the Han people. Xianbei men wore plaids and their apparel with a left lapel, and women wore a top with a padded collar and shorter sleeves. Most Xianbei people did not speak Mandarin Chinese. Emperor Xiaowen issued an

imperial edict prohibiting his people from wearing Xianbei clothes and changing to Chinese garments. He also required that the courtiers wear Chinese court dresses and made Mandarin Chinese the official language. According to his decree, no Xianbei courtiers below 30 could speak the Xianbei language at the court. He abolished all the Xianbei sacrificial rituals and replaced them with Chinese rites. Take the crucial Heaven worshipping practice for example. The Tuoba people used to do it at the capital's western suburbs. Emperor Xiaowen stopped it and followed the Han customs of conducting sacrificial ceremonies dedicated to Heaven around a round altar, as the people in the Han Dynasty had been doing, in the capital's southern suburbs.

Third, Emperor Xiaowen attacked the fusing problem at its root. He coerced the Xianbei people to localize their cemeteries and change their compound family names to Han's single-character surname, so as to reinforce their identification with the views of Huaxia and the hometown complex of Luoyang. The royal name Tuoba was changed into Yuan. Even the "Ten Royal Names" and the "Eight Meritorious Generals' Names" had to be changed. For example, the Baba surname was turned into Sun, and Daxi into Xi. To prevent the Xianbei aristocrats from relocating back to Pingcheng, he issued a decree, according to which the native place of the Xianbei people who had moved to Luoyang was changed to Luoyang County, Henan Prefecture, and they had to be buried in Luoyang after death.

The series of reforms carried out by Emperor Xiaowen involved political, economic, social, cultural, and many other aspects. The measures were effective, and the results were remarkable. As a tribal leader, he fulfilled the last wish of his ancestors. He completely integrated the entire Xianbei into the Chinese civilization, contributing to another incredible feat of fusing the ethnic groups in Chinese history. The ethnic integration in the Northern Dynasties was a milestone in the history of the Chinese nation. With such repeated great integration of ethnic groups, the development of the Chinese nation has been like a surging river, rushing forward with no end.

Chapter 6

The Sui-Tang Civilization



Kai Liu

The palace opened its gate as if it were the gods' abode. Envoys from all countries bowed down to the emperor.

These two lines are from the Tang Dynasty poet Wang Wei's work to describe the spectacular scene of various countries' envoys paying their respects to the emperor of the Tang Dynasty in the Daming Palace. The palace gate opened like a celestial portal revealing the deep and splendid royal residence. The envoys of all countries bowed down to the stately emperor at the red staircase. The words "bowed down" highlighted the monarch's impressive and dignified manner and the High Tang's grand unity and inclusion through the contrast in number and status between the monarch and the foreign emissaries.

The Sui (581–618) and the Tang (618–907) dynasties realized the grand unification of China again after the Qin Dynasty, nurturing a Huaxia civilization in the Yellow River and the Yangtze River basins under a centralized regime. The far-reaching institutional civilizations such as the *sansheng liubu* (three-department-and-six-ministry) and the *keju* (imperial examination) systems finally took shape. The construction of the legal and rites systems was gradually perfected. Liberal ethnic policies and the *Jimifuzhou* (autonomous administrative and political organization) system promoted ethnic fusing. The East Asian cultural sphere with Chinese civilization as the core was unprecedentedly prosperous. The Maritime Silk Road connected China with Southeast Asia, West Asia, and North Africa and promoted their exchanges. The Tang Dynasty dedicated to humanity its extraordinarily magnificent poetry as an unparalleled treasure trove. The all-embracing Sui-Tang civilization reached its peak in the early stage of ancient Chinese society and wrote a glorious chapter in the history of Chinese and even world civilizations.

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© China Social Sciences Press 2023

X. Bu (ed.), *The History of Chinese Civilization*, China Insights,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7125-1_6

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6.1 *Sansheng Liubu and Keju*

The political systems of the Sui and Tang dynasties were significantly developed. The institutions that impacted the later generations the most were the *sansheng liubu* (three-department-and-six-ministry) and the *keju* (imperial examination).

Sansheng Liubu and Local Administrative Institutions

In the first year of the Kaihuang era, an official named He Ruoyi was appointed as the prefect of Hua Prefecture. His experience gave us a glimpse of a major change in the administrative system at that time.

The change began at the central government level. He Ruoyi's appointment must be checked upon by the three departments and the six ministries which had just been established. Emperor Wen of the Sui Dynasty abolished the Northern Zhou Dynasty's six-official system and restored the three-department system: *Shangshu* (Department of State affairs), *Menxia* (Chancellery), and *Neishi* (Chamberlain for the Capital). Under the Secretariat department, there were six sections: *Libu* (Ministry of Personnel), *Libu* (Ministry of Rites), *Bingbu* (Ministry of War), *Duguan* (Criminal Administration Bureau), *Duzhi* (Ministry of Revenue), and *Gongbu* (Ministry of Works) in charge of various central government affairs.

The Tang Dynasty inherited and perfected the Sui Dynasty's system in its early stage, completing the central government's administrative system with three departments and six ministries as the core. The three departments included *Zhongshu* (Central Secretariat) or *Neishi* (Chamberlain for the Capital) in the Sui Dynasty, *Menxia* (Chancellery), and *Shangshu* (Department of State Affairs). Under the *Shangshu* Department, there were six ministries: *Li* (Personnel), *Hu* (Revenue), *Li* (Rites), *Bing* (War), *Xing* (Justice), and *Gong* (Works). Apart from the six ministries, there were also (1) Nine *Si* (Courts): *Taichang* (Imperial Sacrifices), *Guanglu* (Imperial Entertainment), *Weiwei* (Imperial Regalia), *Zongzheng* (Imperial Clan), *Taipu* (Imperial Stud), *Dali* (Judicature and Revision), *Honglu* (State Ceremonial), *Sinong* (National Granaries), and *Taifu* (Imperial Treasury); (2) three *Jian* (Directorates): *Guozhi* (Education), *Jiangzuo* (Palace Buildings), and *Shaofu* (Imperial Manufactories); and 3) a *Yushitai* (Censorate) responsible for supervision.

The three-department and six-ministry system inherited and developed the mechanism of the central administrative system adopted since the Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties. It was a system with the monarchy as the core while focusing on the division of labor and cooperation. The transformation of the central government from individual governance to organizational management was of great historical significance. The three departments and six ministries had their specific responsibilities. The Central Secretariat was responsible for drafting and issuing orders per the emperor's decree. The department was led by two officials known as *Zhongshuling* (Secretariat Directors). The Chancellery was responsible for *fengbo*, which meant reviewing the imperial edicts drafted by the Central Secretariat and criticizing, correcting, and returning the memorials submitted by the Department of State Affairs. The Chancellery was headed by two *Shizhong* (Directors). With the

emperor's decision, the decrees approved by the Central Secretariat and the Chancellery would be handed over to the Department of State Affairs for implementation. The Department of State Affairs was charged with implementing the decrees, which was relied on its six ministries, as well as the Nine Courts and Three Directorates. The head of the Department of State Affairs was often vacant, with his duties taken care of by the Right and Left *Pushe* (Vice Directors). The head of each of the six departments under its jurisdiction was *Shangshu* (Secretary). Each of the six departments had four *Si* (Offices or Bureaus) to attend to the specific government affairs.

Learning from past lessons, the Tang Dynasty adopted a system of multiple *Zaixiang* (Grand Chancellors or Counselors-in-chief). After unifying China by annexing the other six powerful states, the Qin Dynasty put *Chengxiang* or *Xiang* (Counselor-in-chief) above all the other officials to assist the emperor, thus founding the counselor-in-chief system. During the era of Emperor Wu of Han, the power of the counselor-in-chief was gradually transferred to *Shangshuling* (Director), head of *Shangshutai* (Imperial Secretariat). Later, the power of *Chengxiang*, another name for *Zaixiang*, was shared by *Dasikong* (Grand Minister of Works) and *Dasima* (Commander-in-chief). Thus, *Zaixiang* was no longer the official of all officials. During the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties, the Three Dukes became nominal. The Imperial Secretariat was transformed from the "Inner Court" to the "Outer Court." Their responsibilities for the government documents were also gradually taken over by *Zhongshuling* (Secretariat Director), making the Central Secretariat increasingly important. In the Eastern Jin Dynasty, the agency of *Shizhong* (Palace Attendants) evolved into the Chancellery, which checked and balanced the power of the Central Secretariat. By now, the three-department system had been established, with the three department heads being the counselors-in-chief.

In the early Tang Dynasty, the heads of the three departments were all grand chancellors, who met to discuss state and military affairs in *Zhengshitang* (Administration Chamber). Later, two interrelated changes came to pass. First, the emperor divided the grand chancellors' power by selecting middle-level officials to serve in the same position and giving them the title *Tong Zhongshumenxia Pingzhang Shi* (Jointly Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery). This title did not have a rank because any official serving under the title must have another ranked position. Therefore, this arrangement was called "dispatching." During the late Tang era, only those with the title "Jointly Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery" could be referred to as the actual *Zaixiang* (Grand Chancellors). Second, the status of *Shangshu* (Department of State Affairs), with only the executive administrative functions, declined. In contrast, the status of the decision-making agencies, *Zhongshu* (Central Secretariat) and *Menxia* (Chancellery), rose. In Emperor Xuanzong's era, *Zhengshitang* was changed to *Zhongshu Menxia* (Secretariat-Chancellery), which supervised the Five Clerical Units: *Li* (Personnel Office), *Shuji* (Central Control Office), *Hu* (Revenue Office), *Bing* (War Office), and *Xingli* (Justice and Rites Office). The Secretariat-Chancellery became an independent grand chancellor's office and gradually evolved into a decision-making and administrative center.

Thus, the three departments had a distinct division of labor and checked each other, avoiding mistakes in decision-making due to the over-concentration of power. High-ranking local officials in the Sui and Tang dynasties like He Ruoyi had to undergo a whole appointment process: The Chamberlain for the Capital or Central Secretariat would issue a decree, the Chancellery would review it (with the possibility of finding errors and rejecting it), and the Department of State Affairs, particularly its Office of Personnel, would execute it.

However, the local administrative system also changed dramatically. If He Ruoyi had taken office nearby before, he would have had the chance to pick and appoint his aides. But after the third year of the Kaihuang era (583), he could not do so anymore. This is because Emperor Wen of the Sui Dynasty changed the three-level *Zhou-Jun-Xian* (Prefecture-Commandery-County) system into a two-level Prefecture-County system, and abolished the mechanism for local officials to pick and appoint his aides, so as to centralize the power of official appointment. Local officials could only be appointed and dismissed by the Office of Personnel. He Ruoyi could only serve a three-year term in his position in Hua Prefecture. After three years, the court could transfer him elsewhere, pending his performance.

Later in the Tang Dynasty, changes occurred again in the local administrative system. Emperor Taizong divided Tang China into ten *Dao* (Routes) and created the Surveillance Office to supervise prefectures. Emperor Xuanzong further divided China into 15 provisional *Dao*, each having a *Caifangshi* (Investigation Commissioner). The Tang Dynasty adopted the three-level Route-Prefecture-County system. Besides, it also set up several mechanisms related to military affairs, such as *Guan* (Frontier Pass), *Jun* (Army), and *Jian* (Directorate). Meanwhile, the dynasty established *Duhufu* (Protector) and *Jimifu* (Subordinated Prefecture, a category of administrative units with aboriginal groups headed by hereditary native chiefs and subordinated to a Chinese Area Command). The *Jimifu* system was essential in promoting the development of ethnic minority areas and ethnic integration. After the An Lushan Rebellion, the *Jiedushi* (Military Commissioner) system, initially set up in border areas, was adopted throughout the country. A Military Commissioner held the military and administrative power over his or neighboring prefectures, which became an informal first-level administrative division where he could exercise actual authority. Such an area of his jurisdiction could also be called *Dao* (Route) or *fanzhen* (literally meaning “buffer town”). These *fanzhen* separatist forces eventually led to the demise of the Tang Dynasty.

6.1.1 The Establishment of the Keju System

The past awkwardness has become history, Having passed the imperial exam, I'm happy. In the spring breeze, I'm galloping proudly, In one day, I'll take in Chang'an's prosperity.

It is a *qiyan jueju* poem (quatrain with each line having seven characters) titled *Dengkehong* (*After Passing the Imperial Examination*), written by poet Meng Jiao in

the Tang Dynasty. After his success, the *jinshi* candidate was overjoyed, envisioning that his life would turn a new leaf with the prospect of becoming an official to fulfill his aspirations. In a flowing and lucid style, he wrote this unique short poem. However, this successful candidate “in his palmy days” was already in his sixties. The examination to which he had devoted his 46 years was the famous *keju* system.

The *keju* (imperial examination) system was in its embryo during the Northern and Southern dynasties. The Sui Dynasty abolished the *jiupin zhongzheng* (nine-rank) system and enforced the selection of officials by their examination scores. Emperor Yang of Sui set up the *jinshike* (degree of advanced scholars), marking the founding of the *keju* system. The *keju* system in the Tang Dynasty fell into *zhiju* (special-purpose examinations by imperial decree) and *changke* (regular tests). The *zhiju* tests, designed to select unique talents, were infrequently held. The regular examinations produced six degrees: *xiucai* (cultivated talent), *mingjing* (classicist), *jinshi* (presented scholar), *mingfa* (expert in law), *mingshu* (expert in writing), and *mingsuan* (expert in mathematics). The *jinshi* degree was the most important of the regular exam and even the entire *keju* system. A hundred *mingjing* (classicists) were selected annually, 30 more than *jinshi* (presented scholars). But the examination the former took was much less demanding than the latter. They also enjoyed less social prestige. Therefore, the difference was described in a famous proverb, “Those getting the *mingjing* degree at 30 are already too old; those getting the *jinshi* degree at 50 are still young.”

Every winter, thousands of scholars flocked to Chang'an to take the imperial examinations hosted by the Ministry of Rites in the following spring, commonly known as *Chunwei*. Candidates for the exam fell into two categories: *shengtutu* from academies, who took the examination given by the Ministry of Rites, and *xianggong*, who had never gone to an academy and must first pass the tests in the prefectures before being qualified to take the Ministry of Rites examination. Those taking the *mingjing*-degree text must go through *tiejing* (a memory test in which strips of paper were used to cover three consecutive characters in several lines of a given classical text. The candidate must fill in the missing characters to prove he had accurately set the text to memory.) The *jinshi* candidate must take three tests: *tiejing*, *zawen* (writing poems or rhapsodies), and *duice* (the candidates must answer specialized questions of a wide range of *ke* or themes). “In the spring breeze, I’m galloping proudly” vividly portrayed the joy of the lucky candidates who passed the imperial examination.

The candidates who passed the *changke* (regular tests) were not automatically granted the status of appointee for an official. They would not be eligible for it until they were subjected to a quality evaluation by the Ministry of Personnel, a test known as *quanxuan*. There were four criteria for passing the *quanxuan* evaluation: *shen* (candidate’s figure and features), *yan* (candidate’s ability to express himself), *shu* (candidate’s handwriting), and *pan* (candidate’s judgment). Successful *mingjing* candidates were usually assigned middle- or lower-rank positions, whereas successful *jinshi* candidates would have more opportunities to become higher-ranking officials.

The *keju* system curbed *menfa* (old families of hereditary power and influence) and selected talents from poor families, ensuring the prosperity of the Tang Dynasty with competent people. Later generations inherited and developed its nature of disregarding family backgrounds and respecting fair competition. With *keju*, China innovated a relatively perfect mechanism for talent selection, significantly expanding the social base for the ruling class. *Keju* had a far-reaching influence because it became a universal system for determining officials in the middle and late stages of China's ancient society.

6.2 Good Government of Zhenguan

In the third lunar month of the 12th year of the Zhenguan era (638) of the Tang Dynasty, the East Palace Hall in Chang'an was in a festive and peaceful atmosphere. Officials above rank 5 gathered to celebrate the birth of the emperor's grandson. The 40-year-old Emperor Taizong (Li Shimin) was beyond himself with joy. Looking back at the glorious past and thinking of the brilliant achievements of the Great Tang today, he gave a heartfelt summary, "I give the credit to Fang Xuanling, who followed me to suppress rebellions and stick to the triumphant end through thick and thin before my Zhenguan era. After it, someone devoted himself to me, offering me sincere advice to stabilize the country for the benefit of the people. He even risked offending the monarchical dignity to correct my mistakes. This person was none other than Wei Zheng. None of the ancient famous, venerable ministers can surpass them." As he said so, he removed the swords from his waist and gave them to Fang Xuanling and Wei Zheng as an imperial favor.

Emperor Taizong of Tang's remarks revealed the important figures and reasons for the rise of the Tang during the Zhenguan era. Emperor Taizong, Fang Xuanling, and Wei Zheng were the main characters behind the prosperity. Fang Xuanling was credited for his loyalty to the emperor. He had played a crucial role in fighting for hegemony with the Sui Dynasty and turning the table against the emperor's political enemies during the Xuanwu Gate Incident. Wei Zheng's role was also of great importance. He dared to criticize the emperor outspokenly in his face. He even tried his best to correct the emperor when he made mistakes, rendering him at a loss for what to do with him. On a different occasion, Li Shimin said, "Wei Zheng is the only person who has helped me achieve greatness and was loved by the people. None of the famed ministers in ancient times can match him." It showed how much he respected Wei Zheng. An emperor who exerted himself to make the country prosperous and knew to assign people jobs commensurate with their abilities and courtiers represented by Wei Zheng jointly contributed to the *Zhenguan Zhizhi* in the early Tang Dynasty (Fig. 6.1).

The so-called *Zhenguan Zhizhi* (literally "Good Government of Zhenguan") means that the Tang Dynasty was relatively politically stable, economically prosperous, and culturally flourishing. Its national strength was on the rise. That year was during the Zhenguan era, hence the name *Zhenguan Zhizhi*. The Sui Dynasty



Fig. 6.1 *Painting of a walking carriage*, by Yan Liben

fell in less than forty years, a reality witnessed by the monarch and the officials of the early Tang Dynasty. The fearful and watchful Li Shimin paid much attention to its lessons. He proactively selected and promoted talents from Shandong, like Wei Zheng, to help him formulate fundamental policies while continuing to put the aristocrats of the Guanzhong-Longxi Group in crucial positions. He was willing to argue over the pros and cons of their suggestions and accept the suitable options. He and his ministers often met to discuss policies and guiding principles. The contents of their discussion are recorded in Wu Jing's *Zhenguan Zhengyao* (*Essentials of Good Government of the Zhenguan Era*).

Wu Jing recorded many discussions by Emperor Taizong and his ministers according to different categories. The consultation conducted only two months after the emperor's enthronement was of great significance. At that time, two opposing opinions clashed: to govern in kingly or hegemonic way. Wei Zheng adamantly opposed the hegemonic way and suggested governance with benevolence. His opinion firmed Emperor Taizong's determination to enlighten the people with virtues and laid down the basic governance approach during the Zhenguan era.

They also discussed the mandate of imperial power and the relationship between the monarch and the people. Taizong realized the truth that "water can carry a boat, and it can also capsize it." He repeatedly emphasized the need to "feel as the people feel." It was undoubtedly a replica and a concretization of Mencius's people-oriented thought that "people are more important than the ruler." Emperor Taizong used a vivid metaphor, saying, "The way of a monarch is to care for his people. To jeopardize their interest is like feeding yourself the flesh you cut from your body. You may have satisfied your hunger, but you're already dead." He applied the people-oriented thought to practice by cutting corvées and taxes and building water conservation projects.

While emphasizing shared governance of the land under Heaven with his ministers, Emperor Taizong also required them to dare to give him advice outspokenly. One day, when submitting his memorial, Wei Zheng said, "I wish you would want me to become a good minister rather than a loyal one." Emperor Taizong asked in haste about the difference between the two. Wei Zheng responded, "The so-called loyal minister dares to give advice outspokenly but is killed for doing so. His killing not only

gives the monarch the reputation of being unjust but also ruins the victims' families in particular and the country in general. Then, only the dead minister enjoys the fame of being a courageous advice-giver. A good minister dares to advise the monarch straightforwardly, and both he and the monarch share an excellent reputation and ensure prosperity for their later generations." Emperor Taizong was deeply touched upon hearing the remarks and rewarded Wei Zheng lavishly. Later, facts proved that it was because of Wei Zheng's courage in admonishing Emperor Taizong and the latter's willingness to accept remonstrance that both enjoyed immortal reputations: Wei Zheng was a great minister, and Emperor Taizong was a wise monarch. The Tang Dynasty, emerging from the flames of war and chaos at the end of the Sui Dynasty, also embarked on the right path of development.

Wei Zheng's death deeply saddened Emperor Taizong. He said, "We can straighten our clothes with a bronze mirror; we can fathom the rise and fall with the mirror of history; we can know gains and losses with the mirror of a man. I've kept these three mirrors to avoid making mistakes. But with Wei Zheng's death, I've lost one of them." Without this most precious "mirror," who else could bluntly remind Emperor Taizong of his mistakes? With the departure of this iconic figure, the dazzling splendor of *Zhenguan Zhizhi* seemed to dim as well.

6.3 *Tang Code and Rites of the Kaiyuan Era of the Great Tang*

The Sui and Tang dynasties were the heydays of ancient Chinese legal and ritual systems. *Tanglü Shuyi* (*Tang Code*) and *Datang Kaiyuan Li* (*Rites of the Kaiyuan Era of the Great Tang*) are representative works contributing to the system construction.

Dutch sinologist Robert Hans van Gulik wrote an ingenious detective novel about ancient Chinese cases titled *Judge Dee*. He successfully introduced the "Chinese version of Sherlock Holmes" to the world, leaving a great legacy in the history of cultural exchange between China and foreign countries. The protagonist is Di Renjie, a statesman of the Tang and Wu Zhou dynasties.

Di Renjie used to be a *facao* (bailiff) in the Area Command of Bing Prefecture and became Chief Minister of *Dalisi* (Court of Judicature and Revision). He is said to have adjudicated a large backlog of cases involving 17,000 people within a year, but none of them had appealed. The primary basis for his judgment was the *Tang Code*.

The outstanding contribution that the legal system of the Sui and Tang dynasties made was the establishment of a complete written law system with *Lü*, *Ling*, *Ge*, and *Shi* as the main body.

In its early stage, the Sui Dynasty formulated the *Kaihuang Lü Ling* (*Kaihuang Code*). They contained *wuxing* (five forms of punishment): *chi* (beating with a whip), *zhang* (beating with a rod), *liu* (exiling), *xi* (imprisonment), and *si* (death penalty); *shi'e* (ten heinous crimes beyond remittance); *bayi* (eight kinds of lawbreakers

deserving the privilege of pardon). With the documentation structure, the *Kaihuang Code* was inherited by the *Tang Code* and had a far-reaching impact.

The legal forms explicitly stipulated in the Tang Dynasty were *Lü*, *Ling*, *Ge*, and *Shi*. *Lü* meant criminal law, and the Tang Dynasty's *Lü* comprised 500 clauses in 12 articles. *Ling* was about various institutional regulations. Tang's *Ling* had 1500 clauses in 30 articles, with regulations about official ranks and selection being the most significant. *Ge* was about decrees organized into rules and regulations with permanent legal effect. They could be used to supplement and amend *Lü*, *Ling*, and *Shi*. *Shi* was about detailed rules and regulations regarding managing government affairs. The chapters of *Ge* and *Shi* were named after government offices. The officials at all levels managed the government affairs per *Ling* and *Shi*, and the *Lü* ensured the implementation of *Ling* and *Shi*. *Ge* must adapt to social changes. It was a unified legal system with division of labor, with *Lü*, *Ling*, *Ge*, and *Shi* complementing each other. It adjusted social relations in all aspects, improved the governing efficiency of various state institutions, and provided a legal guarantee for the prosperity of the Tang Dynasty.

In the fourth year of the Yonghui era (653), Emperor Gaozong issued *Liushu* (literally "explaining the law"), later called *Tanglü Shuyi* (*Tang Code*). It comprised 12 sections divided into 30 volumes. As good as the legal articles and clauses, this penal code is China's earliest and most complete existent code containing legislative interpretations.

Tang Code has the following characteristics: First, ethics is combined with law, with the former being the main instrument and the latter being the supplement. Second, it is simple and uniform, with clarified concepts and fair punishments. Third, it maintains social and familial hierarchy, with the severity of punishment lessening for people of higher social or family status. Fourth, the supervision of officials is close, and their punishment is severe.

The system of rites is the essential principle for people to conduct themselves and establish a cause for action. It is also the crystallization of subliming their spiritual lives. It has been passed down from generation to generation in the Chinese nation. "Virtues and rites are at the root of *zhengjiao* (governing state affairs and educating the people to transform them), whereas punishment is the tool for *zhengjiao*." The concepts of "integration of Confucianism with law," "combination of rites and law," and "prioritization of virtuous education over penalty" were advocated in ancient China. Apart from *Tang Code* representing the legal system, the representative work on the rites system, *Rites of the Kaiyuan Era of the Great Tang*, had also been completed by the reign of Emperor Xuanzhong of Tang. In the 13th year of the Kaiyuan era (725), Emperor Xuanzhong paid homage to Heaven and Earth at Mount Tai. He kicked off the project of compiling *Rites of the Kaiyuan Era of the Great Tang* the following year per the tradition that rites and music could only be created after the empire's governance succeeded. The project was not completed until the 25th year of the Kaiyuan period (Fig. 6.2).

The *Rites of the Kaiyuan Era of the Great Tang* originally contained three volumes, which later fell into five categories of rites: *Ji*, *Xiong*, *Jun*, *Bin*, and *Jia*, totaling 226 sub-topics. The rituals of *Ji* centered on worshiping Heaven and ancestors,

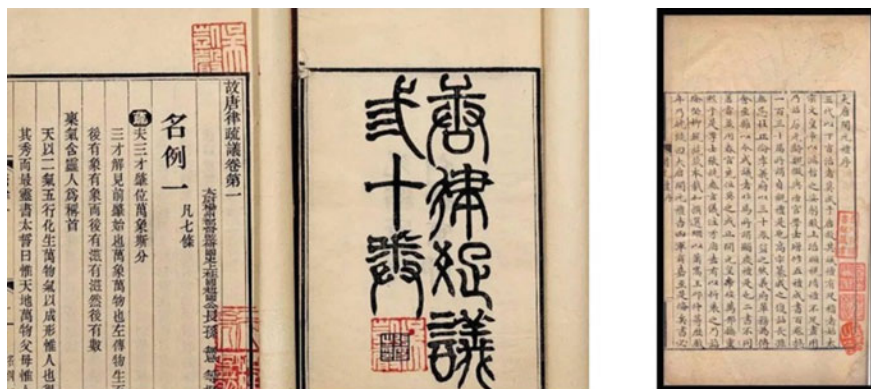


Fig. 6.2 Photographical reproduction of *Tang Code* and surviving section of *Rites of the Kaiyuan Era of the Great Tang*

supplemented by worshipping the Sun and the Moon deities. The rituals of *Xiong* were mainly related to condolences and wishes to alleviate miseries, such as funerals and prayers to avert natural disasters. The rites of *Jun* referred to the military ceremonies performed before a monarch set out for an expedition, such as reviewing archery contests. The rites of *Bin* were the rules of etiquette applied in foreign relations and the reception of guests, such as entertaining a foreign envoy at a banquet. The rites of *Jia* involved national festive ceremonies such as a monarch's wedding.

Based on *Zhenguan Li* (*Rites of the Zhenguan Era*) and *Xianqing Li* (*Rites of the Xianqing Era*), the *Rites of the Kaiyuan Era of the Great Tang* struck a balance between different views and understandings of classics such as the *Book of Rites*. It also integrated the emerging etiquette of the Tang Dynasty, reflecting that the rites system of the Tang Dynasty was innovative and kept pace with the times. Throughout the history of its formation, transformation, and development, it is safe to say that the system is open and inclusive rather than closed and exclusive. Having originated from the *Rites of Zhou*, the five-rite system of *Ji*, *Xiong*, *Jun*, *Bin*, and *Jia* was the peak of the rites system in ancient China. It gradually matured as the rituals and customs of ethnic minorities were steadily blended into the five rites during the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern dynasties. The *Rites of the Kaiyuan Era of the Great Tang* came into being in the inclusive dynasties of Sui and Tang. As a representative of the five-rite system in its perfecting era, the *Rites of the Kaiyuan Era of the Great Tang* made the “Five Rites” more comprehensive and detailed by drawing on the civilizations of the surrounding ethnic peoples. Thus, it became the basis for later dynasties to create their rites and music. The open and inclusive nature facilitated the rites system to undergo structural changes and innovation by learning from other civilizations. As such, the system had endured for thousands of years.

6.4 Chang'an, a World Metropolis, and the Eastern Asian Cultural Sphere with Tang as the Core

At the turn of the century, two significant archaeological discoveries were made, one in the ocean and the other on land. They showed the world a glimpse of the thriving Tang Dynasty civilization and its active exchange with foreign countries, the world-class metropolis Chang'an, Tang China as the core of the East Asian cultural sphere, and the inclusive and tolerant spirit of the High Tang period (Fig. 6.3).

From 1998 to 1999, German cement factory owner Tilman Walterfang, obsessed with salvaging shipwrecks, found wreckages of a sunken boat near a sizeable black reef in the waters of Belitung Island, Indonesia. He named the wreck "Batu Hitam" (Black Rock). It took him nine months to recover Batu Hitam. It was a dhow made in India or the Arab world. Scholars believed that the dhow must have set out from Yangzhou for the Persian Gulf.

The vessel was full of Chinese goods shipped to West Asia and North Africa via Southeast Asia. There were over 67,000 pieces of porcelain, of which most were from the Changsha Kiln, amounting to 5000 or so. There were also several hundred cobalt-blue-and-white ceramics, of which three intact Tang cobalt-blue-and-white ceramic plates were the most eye-catching. They are the earliest and most complete Chinese blue- and-white porcelain ware discovered so far. The ship also carried ten pieces of gold ware, 24 silverware, 18 sycees, and 30 bronze mirrors. The gold ware was as exquisite as the Tang Dynasty's gold and silver ware excavated from a cellar in Hejia Village, Xi'an, in 1970. Among them, the eight-square gold gobbler decorated with patterns of Hu musicians was 10 cm taller than the gold cup unearthed in Hejia Village. The text, "Tempered in the Yangtze River at Yangzhou on the 29th day of the



Fig. 6.3 *Receiving Envoys and Guests*, unearthed from the tomb of Crown Prince Zhanghuai, Tang Dynasty

11th month in the first year of the Qianyuan era in the Tang Dynasty,” was inscribed on a bronze mirror. It shows that the mirror was forged in Yangzhou in 758, which was what is recorded in historical records as the Tang *Jiangxin* (literally the heart of the Yangtze River) Mirror. The text “The second year of the Baoli era under the reign of Emperor Jingzong of Tang” was found on a bowl from the Changsha Kiln. Based on the research of other artifacts, scholars confirmed the date of the sinking of the Blackstone as the first half of the ninth century. The sunken ship and the objects it contained are a microcosm of the foreign exchange carried out by the Tang Dynasty.

On October 10, 2004, a press conference jointly held by Northwestern University and the Shaanxi Bureau of Cultural Relics was in progress in Xi'an, the capital of the High Tang. The conference featured a precious tomb memorial tablet of the Tang Dynasty in memory of a visiting Japanese student Shinsei Sei. This privately collected tablet had 12 Chinese characters engraved on its cover in the Seal script, “A tablet dedicated to late Shinsei Sei, Chief Steward of the Shangyi Bureau.” The epitaph, carved in Regular script, comprises 171 characters in 12 lines. The most eye-catching is the first line, “Surname: Sei; name: Shinsei; nationality: Japan.” According to the epitaph, Shinsei Sei was a *bel esprit* sent to Tang China by Japan to study its ritual and music system. There, he held an official position. Unfortunately, he died of illness in the 12th year of the Kaiyuan era at 36. To express his condolences, Emperor Xuanzong granted him the posthumous position of Chief Steward of the Shangyi Bureau at Rank 5. Shinsei Sei's experience is also a microcosm of the life of many foreigners in China at that time.

Whether the Batu Hitam in the ocean or the international student in Chang'an City, they were the tip of the iceberg of the thriving scene of the Tang Dynasty. There lived in Chang'an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty, not only visiting students from Japan like Shinsei Sei but also the envoys, clergymen, and business people from Central Asia, India, and even the Eastern Roman Empire. At that time, Chang'an was not only the political, economic, and military hub of the Sui and Tang dynasties but also the center of Chinese culture and even the fusion and convergence of Eastern and Western cultures. In the world at that time, Chang'an was indeed a “cosmopolitan city” in terms of size, population, trade, and cultural diversity. The predecessor of Chang'an in the Tang Dynasty was Daxing City, built under the auspices of Yuwen Kai in the Sui Dynasty. The organization and *fangshi* (square market system) layout of the Sui Dynasty remained, only that an outer city was added during Emperor Gaozong's reign. It was a systematically planned and built metropolis and capital adapted to the new situation of grand unification. According to *Tang Liu Dian* (*The Six Statutes of Tang Dynasty*), Chang'an was 18 *li* and 115 *bu* (about 9721 m) from east to west and 17 *li* 170 *bu* from north to south. Archaeological discoveries have verified this record. According to the survey, the total area of Chang'an City in the Sui and Tang dynasties reached 84 square kilometers, almost six times that of the city in the Ming Dynasty. Its grandeur in the Tang Dynasty can be imagined.

The most notable feature of Chang'an City is its neatness: It looks like a Go board from the plan. The city's overall structure consists of three parts: the Palace City, the Imperial City, and the Capital City. The Palace City and the Imperial City were at the core of the metropolis. The Palace City was where the emperor lived

and attended to state affairs. It contained the Taiji Palace, the Daming Palace, and the Xingqing Palace, collectively referred to as the “Three Royal Palaces.” The Imperial City was mainly the seat of government agencies of the imperial court. The Capital City primarily embraced the residential area and the East and West markets. This layout basically separated the public space from the private one. The large city accommodated a large population. The Tang poet Cen Shen wrote in his poem, “Of the million families in Chang’an / I don’t know who’s the flute player at night,” which outlined the population size of the city by then.

As the Tang Dynasty’s capital and the most prosperous city in the world at that time, Chang’an must have the most complex population structure. Written by Wei Shu during Emperor Xuanzong’s reign, *Liangjing Xinji (A New Record of Two Capitals)*, the earliest Chinese classic of Chang’an, systematically described the city’s founding. Wei Shu not only recorded the palace buildings, the Buddhist and Taoist temples, the historical sites, and the mansions of the dignitaries at that time, but also recorded various stories circulating among the citizens. His depiction of the Hu (Eurasian ethnic peoples) of diverse backgrounds lent more color and charm to the Tang Dynasty’s capital, Chang’an. Whether in the fields of painting, music, dance, and other arts or in the areas of social customs such as clothing and entertainment, Chang’an in the High Tang era was greatly influenced by foreign cultures. Li Bai, a famed Tang poet, wrote the poem *Shaonian Xing (The Chang’an Youth)*,

A dandy visits a market with many a jewelry shop. He trots proudly on his white horse, clippety-clop. Where is he going treading all the fallen flowers? Here, by a Hu singers’ tavern, did this youth drop.

Despite the short four lines, this poem vividly delineated the exotic sentiment and the underlying cultural elements.

The Batu Hitam shipwreck is merely a glimpse of the Tang Dynasty’s foreign exchange. Its foreign relations at this time had entered a glorious period.

First, as the core of the East Asian cultural sphere, the Tang Dynasty’s economic and cultural exchange with Asian countries expanded unprecedentedly. The Tang Dynasty established an imperial tributary system with its surrounding countries. The East Asian cultural sphere embraced the Korean Peninsula, Japan, and Vietnam, with China as the core. They shared common cultural elements, such as Chinese characters, Confucianism, the legal system, and Chinese Buddhism. These elements took root in East Asia through the education system, with Confucian education as the main body buttressed by the *miaoxue* (Confucian-temple-school) system, where Confucius was worshiped in educational institutions. In such a manner, these elements took root in East Asia and shaped their scholars’ shared consciousness and norms of conduct. The Tang Dynasty was the most critical period for forming the East Asian cultural sphere. It was also closely related to the Indian and Islamic cultural spheres.

As the most powerful country in the world at that time, the Tang Dynasty had close trade relations with Southeast Asia and even West Asia and North Africa through the Maritime Silk Road. Beginning around the Kaiyuan era, the Tang Dynasty created the Maritime Trade Commissioner post in Guangzhou to manage seagoing trade. When

foreign merchant ships docked at the port, the commissioner first registered the goods, collected the merchant tax, and purchased the things needed by the government before allowing the merchants to trade freely. More than 4000 sizeable foreign merchant ships arrived in Guangzhou every year. In his *Tangguo Shibu* (*Supplemental History of the Tang Empire*), Li Zhao described the merchant ships docking at the port of Guangzhou. He emphasized, “The ships from the Simhaladvip (Sri Lanka) are the more sizeable. The multiple decks measure several *zhang* (1 *zhang* equals more than 3 m). They are full of treasure goods.”

Compared with the Arab dhows like Batu Hitam, the Tang tower ships were colossal and sturdier, more capable of enduring the raging waves of the Persian Gulf. At that time, there was a famous route between China and areas like Southeast Asia, known to the Chinese then as Nanyang, and the Persian Gulf countries. It was called the “Shipping Lane from Guangzhou to Foreign Countries.” It went by Vietnam, led through the Indian Ocean into the Persian Gulf, and reached East Africa and Europe, passing over a hundred countries with a total length of 14,000 km. It was the longest international shipping route in the world at that time, linking the East Asian, Indian, and Islamic cultural spheres.

6.5 Tang Poetry

In the first year of the Tianbao era (742), Emperor Xuanzong of Tang, Li Longji, indulged himself in drinking and merrymaking in the palace. The tipsy emperor asked his subordinates to compose a pentametric old-style verse to record the fun time in the court to pass it on to future generations. The talented poet Li Bai, who had bragged, “Excited, I can shake the mountains with my pen / The chant of my poem can deafen the ocean,” was present at the court. Slightly drunken, he wielded the pen brush dipped with ink and moved it on paper as if it were a galloping steed. He wrote ten poems collectively known as the *Gongzhong Xingle Ci* (*Verses on Merrymaking at Court*) in one breath. He hid his aspiration for worrying about and doing good for society in flowery language. An addict to alcohol, he wrote as he drank, and the poetic lines flew like spring water. Then, he felt his boots cumbersome and asked Gao Lishi to take them off. Gao Lishi was the all-powerful eunuch who had been General-in-chief Commanding the Troops and Dynasty-founding Duke of Bohai, and now Palace Domestic Service Director. Since the emperor was amused and waiting to see him ridiculed for fun, Gao Lishi had to stoop down and do as Li Bai had requested. However, Li Bai was soon banished from the capital due to his folly.

It is an anecdote of half-truth, requiring particular efforts to tell how much of it was fabricated. The ten-poem *Verses on Merrymaking at Court* were indeed penned by Li Bai for Emperor Xuanzong that year. Through the story, we can still catch a glimpse of Li Bai’s character described in his lines, “How can I bow to the powerful and influential / To make myself unhappy and woeful?”

It is not hard to imagine how insipid the High Tang would have been without Li Bai’s tasteful verses. Geniuses may always emerge in large numbers, and the poets

of the Tang Dynasty were as many and brilliant as flowers blooming in a riot of colors. However, if we were given a choice to select only one person to represent the thriving poetry in the High Tang period, Li Bai was undoubtedly the one we must pick. His appearance was the best luck endowed to that era.

China's classical poems (*gutishi*) and regulated verses (*xintishi*) with five (*wuyan*) or seven characters (*qiyan*) in a line reached their peak in the Tang Dynasty, representing China's highest accomplishment in classical poetry. It is a bright pearl in the treasure house of Chinese culture and the priceless treasure that the Chinese nation has contributed to humankind. As Lu Xun put it, "Tang did all the poems we can come up with." More than 55,000 poems composed by over 3,100 Tang poets are found today, collected in a Qing-dynasty compilation *Quan Tangshi* (*Complete Tang Poems*), Ichikawa Kansai's *Zento Shutsu* (*A Collection of Tang Dynasty Poetry that Made Its Way to Japan*), and a contemporary's *Quan Tangshi Bujian* (*Supplement to the Complete Tang Poems*). Tang poems are unprecedented in number, range of authors, variety of genres and styles, and influence on Chinese and world literature.

Tang poetry thrived due to the social, political, and economic conditions. The economic prosperity and the national strength of the Tang Dynasty provided a suitable environment for creating poetry. The relatively liberal political and all-inclusive cultural environment was conducive to dynamic thinking. The system of selecting scholars by testing their poetic talent, plus the encouragement from the imperial rulers, brought attention to poetic skills. Cultural exchange between the Tang Dynasty and foreign nations exposed China to the arts of foreign regions. The experience in poetic creation accumulated by the previous generations of poets provided the themes and techniques for Tang poetry. All of these contributed to a hotbed for Li Bai's poetic creation.

Li Bai's poetry is unprecedentedly bold, unrestrained, romantic in style, and surpassingly beautiful in language. Its mood is far-reaching, and its cadence is musical. His *Qiang Jin Jiu* (*Bring in the Wine*) has the momentum of an avalanche or an uncontrollable ocean and is mind-wrenching and soul-snaring to the reader. However, Li Bai could also write refreshing and lovely lines like "You came on your bamboo stick horse / I fiddle with a plum around the well." The fact was that any poem from Li Bai would undoubtedly reach the utmost level despite its genre or theme. A Song-dynasty poetry theorist commented that others composed poems with pen brushes while Li Bai breathed them out from his heart. Yu Guangzhong (1928–2017), a writer and poet, said meaningfully, "As wine enters his proud and confident stomach, seventy percent of it he brewed into the moonlight, and the rest he smelt into an air of a sword. Once he spat it out of his creative mouth, it instantly became half of the High Tang era." It is the observation from someone who is keenly appreciative of Li Bai's talents.

Li Bai became increasingly famous for his poetry, so much so that Emperor Xuanzong wanted to meet him. That is why the abovementioned anecdote of "Gao Lishi being made to take off Li Bai's boots" came into being. Proud and unbridled, Li Bai found it hard to adapt to the court life in Chang'an. In his poem, *Yin Zhong Baxian Ge* (*Eight Immortals Indulged in Wine*), Du Fu, an equally celebrated contemporary poet, wrote,

Li Bai can write a hundred poems after drinking a jar of wine. In a Chang'an street pub, he may get drunk and asleep recline. When summoned, he told the monarch he was a Wine Immortal, To board His Majesty's boat, he audaciously decided to decline.

Du Fu knew Li Bai the best, indeed. In this mere four-line poem, he sketched Li Bai's image of an unrestrained drinker poet true to life. Li Bai's cause of death was a moot question. One version has a rich color of romanticism: He was drinking on a boat in the middle of the Yangtze River. In a trance, he mistook the moon's reflection for the actual orb of night. He bent over the boat's side, trying to fish it but fell into the water and drowned. Later generations preferred this version because it beautifully fits Li Bai's image of an unmatched drinker poet.

Compared with Li Bai, the representative of romantic poetry, Du Fu, eleven years his junior, was usually regarded as the embodiment of realistic poetry. The difference in style did not affect their friendship. Du Fu, an admirer of Li Bai, was always concerned about him. Among his poems, 15 were dedicated to Li Bai. He highly praised Li Bai's poems in a poem,

Li Bai's poetry is unique and charming, Graceful in style and unique in thinking. His poems are as beautiful as Bao Zhao's, Like iconic Yu Xin, he's also refreshing.

His lines, "As officials parade themselves in public / Only he looked haggard in private," vented his anger at the court's mistreatment of Li Bai.

I haven't seen Li Bai for a long time, By his feigned lunacy, saddened I'm. I alone appreciate his genuine talent, Tho' none forgives his alleged crime.

This poem reveals how close he was to Li Bai as his confidant.

Du Fu was unsuccessful in his pursuit of passing the imperial examination and getting a government official position all his life. He lived a hard life in his early years, as he described in his poem, "I knocked on the doors of people wealthy in the morn / I followed dust-kicking steeds well-fed in the dusk." The An Lushan Rebellion broke out in his middle age, rendering him homeless. However, without the turbulence created by the rebellion, he could not have become a "poet-historian" and wrote poems to express his concerns about his country and people. Some of them include *Bei Zheng* (*Journey North*), *Chun Wang* (*A Spring View*), and the series of poems under the titles of *San Li* (*Three Officers*) and *San Bie* (*Three Separations*). Suppose he had not wandered in the chaotic wartime and had to depend on others for a living from time to time. In that case, he could not have written the soul-stirring verses like *Maowu Wei Qiufeng Suo Po Ge* (*My Cottage Unroofed by Autumn Gales*) and *Qixing Bashou* (*Eight Laments: Allusion and Imagery as Modes of Poetry*). The An Lushan Rebellion ended the era of the Kaiyuan Shengshi (Prosperous Years of the Kaiyuan Era). Simultaneously, Du Fu's verses with profound sorrow and rhythmic cadence put a forceful period mark on the sentence of the High Tang's poetry.

The High Tang poetry boasted not only Li Bai and Du Fu but also lyrical poet Wang Wei and frontier poet Cen Shen. There were also early, middle, and late Tang Dynasty poets.

The early Tang prepared for the Tang poetry's thriving. Significant early Tang poets include what is known in literary history as the "Four Paragons of the Early

Tang”: Wang Bo, Yang Jiong, Lu Zhaolin, and Luo Binwang. In addition, there were also others like Chen Zi’ang and Shen Quanqi. Their inspiring poetic styles and tastes added something new to early Tang poetry. Take Chen Zi’ang’s *Deng Youzhou Tai Ge* (*Song on the Youzhou Terrace*), for example. With its depiction of a vast barren scene filled with sorrows, it is reputed as a masterpiece of the poetry of the nostalgia genre. He wrote,

Where were the ancients gone before me? Where are the generations to come after me?
Thinking of the boundlessness of the Universe, I feel so lonely that I can’t my tears disperse.

Bai Juyi was the most accomplished poet of the middle Tang Dynasty. He advocated the idea of “writing prose to keep abreast with the times and poetry to reflect what is happening.” His easy-to-understand poems are critical of the social evils of his time. His poems of political satire, like the fifty poems of *Xin Yuefu* (*New Songs of the Music Bureau*) and ten verses of *Qin Zhong Yin* (*Songs from Qin*), are all poetic works of great significance, making him a spokesman for the suffering people.

The representatives of the late Tang poets were the “Junior Li and Du,” namely Li Shangyin and Du Mu. Li Shangyin shared Li Bai’s romanticism and Du Fu’s profound sorrow. His poetry was also as imaginative as Li He’s. Du Mu’s poems were rich in content and broad in vision, written in refreshing and natural language. Of his elegant and resplendent poetry, those composed in the *qiyan jueju* form (verses consisting of four lines of seven characters each) are the most prominent.

Chapter 7

The Song-Yuan Civilization



Hao Sun

The Song and Yuan dynasties from the 10th to the fourteenth century were a new period of collision, exchange, and cohesion among various Chinese ethnic regimes. First, the Khitan people established the Liao Dynasty (916–1125). Then the Jurchen Jin Dynasty (1115–1234) rose to rival the Song Dynasty in the South. In the meantime, the Jurchen Jin ended the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127) and dominated Northeast China to continue the contest with the Southern Song (1127–1279). The ethnic peoples in the border regions outside the domains of the Liao, Song, and Jin dynasties also founded their regimes and became their tributary states. They included the Western Xia Dynasty (1038–1227), Gaochang (also known as the Kara-Khoja), Kara-Khanid Khanate (replaced by Western Liao later), and Kingdom of Khotan (conquered by Kara-Khanid Khanate later), controlling the strategically significant sections of the Silk Road. They also comprised the regimes and tribes like the Dali Kingdom, the Tubo, and the Tatars. Eventually, the Mongols established the Yuan Dynasty and ended the multi-regime situation, opening a new chapter of a unified China with the Han fused with other ethnic peoples.

During the Song and Yuan dynasties, the center of China's historical development shifted to the east, and North China replaced the Northwest as China's primary capital-circle development region. The southeastern coastal area also consolidated its position as China's economic center during this period. The unified multi-ethnic nation was further solidified and developed in the new historical stage, creating a new pattern for the future development of Chinese society. At the same time, the Chinese civilization in the Song and Yuan dynasties took on a new look based on the achievements of the previous Sui and Tang dynasties. For instance, the perfection of the civil service system further strengthened the imperial power, promoted the growth of the scholar-official class, and gave birth to the elite culture of scholars who advocated rational thinking. The ancient market economy developed highly in

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X. Bu (ed.), *The History of Chinese Civilization*, China Insights,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7125-1_7

the Song and Yuan dynasties, giving rise to the handicraft industry and commercial systems with modern flavors. Naturally, urban secular culture flourished. Significant scientific and technological inventions such as gunpowder, the compass, and movable type were continuously improved and perfected. They began to spread to the West through the active exchanges with countries along the Silk Road.

7.1 China Run by Scholar-Officials

One of the essential features of Chinese political civilization in the Song and Yuan dynasties was that the civil service system replaced aristocratic politics as the primary mechanism of state governance. Many Confucian intellectuals who had passed the imperial examinations and entered the civil service formed a new group composed of scholar-officials. They became the backbone of the society to influence the development direction of ancient Chinese civilization.

The Song was the most typical dynasty in which scholar-officials governed the country. At the beginning of its establishment, the Northern Song Dynasty was committed to eradicating the ills of the late Tang Dynasty, where the military men had their separatist regimes, rendering the central government less effective and the monarch's authority weaker than its subordinates. Zhao Kuangyin, Emperor Taizu and founder of the Song Dynasty, restored the civil service system by limiting the military leaders' power. His first act was what historians know as the incident of *beijiu-shi-bingquan* (he invited founding generals to a banquet where he dissolved their military power). Legend has it that Zhao Kuangyin erected a stele of oath at the Imperial Ancestral Temple. He used it to admonish future generations not to kill scholar-officials and outspoken advisors indiscriminately. Emperor Renzong raised the emphasis on the *keju* system, culture, and education to a new level. Scholar-officials enjoyed high political status under his reign. Wen Yanbo, a famous statesman in the Northern Song Dynasty, once said to Emperor Shenzong that a monarch should "rule the world under Heaven with scholar-officials rather than common people." His few words shed light on the essence of the political situation at that time and helped later scholars develop the concept of monarchs and scholar-officials sharing state governance. It has become an important proposition that summarizes the characteristics of the political conditions of the Song Dynasty.

The Song Dynasty used *keju* as the primary mechanism to select officials based on their merits regardless of their family backgrounds. The move ended the aristocratic monopoly of political powers and turned Confucian intellectuals into the primary force of state governance. Most of these intellectuals had a clear sense of national responsibility and the spirit of being masters of the country. They stuck to Confucian ethics and the Way of Heaven and took upon themselves the responsibility of "honoring the monarch" and "administering state affairs." They actively assisted the emperor in ruling the country and dared to advise him outspokenly. However, while promoting "civil governance" and relying heavily on the Confucian scholar-officials, the emperors of the Song Dynasty did not mean to share their authority with them.

They only wanted to encourage them to participate in decision-making and help the rulers administer state affairs. The nature of autocratic monarchy never changed.

Linked to the concept of “governance by scholar-officials” was the separation and check-and-balance of powers under the civil service system. The Song Dynasty inherited and innovated the power separation mechanism inherited from the Tang Dynasty. Back in the Tang Dynasty, power separation was realized through dividing the administrative center into three links in charge of adopting, reviewing, and implementing decrees, respectively. While the Song Dynasty shifted the focus of institutional design to dispersing the function of the administrative center. It further shrank and dispersed the authority of the Tang Dynasty’s system of Secretariat-Chancellery, an executive agency of grand chancellors. Military affairs were transferred to *Shumiyuan* (Bureau of Military Affairs) and finance to the *Sansishi* (State Finance Commissioners). Together, the Secretariat-Chancellery and the Bureau of Military Affairs were also known as *Erfu* (Two Bureaus), who both coordinated with and checked each other. Meanwhile, the Bureau of Military Affairs was only responsible for national defense and military administration and had a check-and-balance relationship with the *Sanya* (Three Commands), which had the actual power of commanding the military forces. The *Sansi* (State Finance Commission) was the highest finance authority reporting directly to the emperor. It was set up by combining the three financial agencies of the Tang Dynasty: *Yantie* (Salt and Iron Monopoly Bureau), *Duzhi* (Revenue Section), and *Hubu* (Ministry of Revenue). The Secretariat-Chancellery and the Bureau of Military Affairs had no power to interfere in financial affairs. By separating the civil, financial, and military authorities and through the check-and-balance relationship of the heads of each agency, the emperor put everyone under his control. Simultaneously, the administrations did not have to check and balance each other on a multi-layer basis within their respective spheres of power. This transformation realized the organic combination of imperial autocracy and administrative efficiency and further promoted the professionalism of bureaucratic administration in ancient China.

The Song Dynasty further improved the system of selecting scholar-officials through *keju*. A confidentiality mechanism was implemented to prevent examiners from cheating by knowing the examinees’ names and handwriting. The mechanism involved locking examinees’ dormitories, sealing the exam papers, and duplicating them for records. More importantly, the custom of emperors presiding over the top-level imperial examination was institutionalized in the Song Dynasty. The dynasty initiated a three-level *keju* system: *Jieshi* (prefectural exam), *Huishi* (conference exam taken at the Ministry of Rites of the Department of State Affairs), and *Dianshi* (court exam taken in the imperial palace). The candidate who scored the highest at the prefectural level was called *Jieyuan* (Top Escorted Examinee), he who scored the highest at the Ministry of Rites level was named *Shengyuan* (Top Conference Examinee), and he who scored the best at the court level was referred to as *Zhuangyuan* (Advanced Scholar). To excel at all levels was the Chinese scholars’ loftiest aspiration and the best reward for the hard time and energy they had invested. The finalist of the exam presided over by the emperor became the “Disciple of the Son of

Heaven” (*Tianzi Mensheng*). This system further enhanced the emperor’s authority and influence in the bureaucracy.

In the Song Dynasty, officials’ ranks and seniority were separated from their positions, resulting in a class of scholar-officials enjoying preferential government treatment without necessarily holding any offices. It was the prototype of the modern civil service system but had the drawback of having more officials than needed. Therefore, reform became an essential theme in the political development of the Song Dynasty.

In the eleventh century, the Northern Song Dynasty faced pressure from Liao and Western Xia dynasties from the north. Its treasury could hardly make ends meet due to the enormous military expenditure on frontier defense and the cost of civilian official overstaffing. The defeat in the war against the Western Xia Dynasty during Emperor Renzong’s reign gave the court anxiety and trouble at home and abroad. It prompted the Song rulers to firm their determination on reforms. From the reign of Emperor Renzong to that of Emperor Shenzong, scholar-officials like Fan Zhongyan, Han Qi, Fu Bi, and Wang Anshi were successively hired to carry out reforms.

They rectified the officialdom, trying to eliminate the drawbacks of the civil service system and stabilize the frontier defense. Noticeable results were achieved. The influence of the Wang Anshi Reforms during the Xining Era of Emperor Shenzong was the most far-reaching, and it became the most famous reform effort in Chinese history following Shang Yang’s Reforms. Wang Anshi conducted extensive social, political, and military reforms in response to official and military overstaffing and financial over-expenditure. His endeavor to explore all possible financial sources and exploit new ones improved the Song army’s combat effectiveness and consolidated the frontier defense in the Northwest. The concept of “making the country financially sufficient without collecting more taxes” that Wang Anshi applied in his reforms was a valuable historical experience in ancient Chinese state governance and was praised by the later generations.

Nevertheless, the development of scholar-official politics in the Song Dynasty was by no means stable and orderly. The factions within the scholar-official group representing conflicting interests always hindered the operation of the Song’s governance and its reforms and became the dynasty’s chronic disease. It was easy for the scholar-officials to become political allies for various reasons: coming from the same native place, studying together, taking offices simultaneously, and sharing the same political views. The multiple factions led to internal strife as they constantly jostled with one another. Significant reforms in the history of the Song Dynasty tended to abort due to the factional struggles. Later, the political differences between the rival “New” and “Old” factions evolved into a dissent between antagonizing interest groups, which led to the negligence of national affairs at the end of the Northern Song Dynasty and its ultimate demise at the hands of the Jin Dynasty.

7.2 The Rise of Neo-Confucianism

The Song-Yuan period was also a significant turning point in ancient Chinese thought and culture. The rise of Neo-Confucianism influenced the development direction of later generations' thinking. It is safe to say that the emergence of Neo-Confucianism was the product of scholar-officials' self-awareness and their strong sense of mission in their times. The new scholar-officials were tired of the *zhushu* (giving commentaries and sub-commentaries to Confucian classics) tradition of the Han and Tang dynasties. They began to pay attention to theoretical argumentation and explore the speculative relationship between human nature, nature, and the Way of Heaven. At that time, most Neo-Confucianism advocates gave lectures and debated in private academies, resulting in a free academic atmosphere in which ideas and theories encouraged each other and blended.

The Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi brothers of the Northern Song Dynasty were among the pioneers of Neo-Confucianism. The Neo-Confucian thought they developed was initially called the Luoyang School since they had taught in Luoyang for a long time. Under the influence of Zhang Zai, a Neo-Confucian thinker, the brothers put forward the ultimate proposition of *tianli* (Heavenly principle) and developed their ideological system based on it. Though both centered their theories on *tianli*, the brothers differed in their views. On the one hand, Cheng Hao emphasized the discussion of the relationship between human ethics and the nature of the universe. On the other hand, Cheng Yi advocated transforming the knowledge by observation into the knowledge of morals and the idea of *gewu zhizhi* (investigating things to understand Confucianism through study). The two Chengs recruited many disciples and gave lectures, developing the Luoyang School into one of the most famous schools then. *Chengmen-lixue* (literally "standing in the snow at Cheng's door") is a well-known Chinese proverb. It tells the story of two *Jinshi* (presented scholars), Yang Shi and Yang Zuo. They came to visit Cheng Yi together and stood in the snow at his doorstep for a long time, not to disturb the dozing Cheng Yi. Later generations of the Chinese have used this proverb to teach their children to respect their teachers and teachers' teachings.

Neo-Confucianism flourished in the Southern Song Dynasty. The discussions and debates centered on the origin of Confucian ethics and morals led to the formation of many schools of learning. The most prominent was Zhu Xi's School of Min (short for Fujian Province), also known as the School of Kaoting, after the name of the Kaoting Academy of Classical Learning, whose location was where Zhu Xi lived in his later years. Zhu Xi was the master of Neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty, universally recognized as the most significant representative of Confucianism after Confucius and Mencius. His theory gained the same following as the two Chengs, and together, their theories have been called the "Cheng-Zhu School" of Neo-Confucianism. Zhu Xi developed the *li* (natural law or objective spirit) and *qi* (life force or material world) hypothesis based on the thoughts of Zhang Zai and the two Chengs, emphasizing the precedence of *li* over *qi*. He used the theory to theorize the relationship between man and Heaven, advocating *cun tianli, qu renyu* ("preserving the principles of Heaven

and discarding the improper and selfish human desires”). He maintained that the social and political order was “made what it was by the principles of Heaven.” He argued for adhering to *Sangang Wuchang* principles (Three Cardinal Guides and Five Constant Virtues). Zhu Xi’s thought provided a set of practical moral teachings for state and social governance in ancient China and soon rose to the status of an orthodox ideology of the feudal dynasties. Since the Yuan Dynasty, *Sishu Zhangju Jizhu* (*Interlinear Analysis of and Collected Commentaries on the Four Books*) and other works of Zhu Xi became the reference books for the imperial examination. The influence of the Cheng- Zhu School extended to the entire East Asia region in the fourteenth century.

The reason why Zhu Xi’s thought could benefit the later generations had to do with his life-long effort to promote education and disseminate academic thinking. He had devoted all his life to such a cause. He set up academics in Hunan, Jiangxi, and Fujian, where he lectured to spread his thoughts. His name made Yuelu Academy, Bailudong (White Deer Grotto) Academy, and Kaoting Academy well-known to all the Chinese. He formulated *Bailudong Xuegui* (*White Deer Grotto Academy Rules for Study*), one of the earliest educational regulations in the world. It systematically prescribes the mission and content of teaching, the procedures of learning, and the code of conduct for teachers and students (Fig. 7.1).

The only famous school of learning that could debate with the Zhu-Cheng School was *Xinxue* (Learning of the Heart-and-Mind), represented by Lu Jiuyuan, a native of Jiangxi. Since he had lectured at Xiangshan (southwest of today’s Guixi, Jiangxi Province), the school he founded was also referred to as the School of Xiangshan. Lu Jiuyuan put forward the theory of the unity of the mind (*xin*) and the Way (*li*). He made human ethics the highest knowledge of the Way, advocating “honoring morality” and making the mind the commander of subjective and objective knowledge. He believed



Fig. 7.1 Bailudong Academy

that the highest knowledge of the Way came from practicing inner reflection and self-education. It was a far cry from Zhu Xi's theory that the Way (*li*) was the noumenon while the mind (*xin*) was the subject of knowledge, with the latter emphasizing that objective practices inspired inner wisdom. The two sides met at Goose Lake in Jiangxi in 1175 and held the renowned Goose Lake Conference in Chinese intellectual history. A heated debate over the different epistemologies: *zun dexting* (honoring the moral nature) and *daowenxue* (following the path of inquiry and study), lasted three days. But the two opposing views could never agree. Lu Jiuyuan's *Xinxue* showed its tendency to break into myriads of branches and its potential to become a dogma even when Neo-Confucianism was in its heyday. But it laid the foundation for the later development of Wang Yangming's Idealism in the Ming Dynasty.

While Neo-Confucianists attached great importance to the understanding and cultivation of the mind, they paid equal attention to understanding the Way of Heaven and natural law through the inner self and putting what has been learned into practical use for governance. They called it *neisheng waiwang* (sagely in the inner sphere and kingly in the outer sphere). Zhang Zai of the Northern Song Dynasty summed the theory up as "ordaining conscience for Heaven and Earth, securing life and fortune for the people, continuing lost teachings for past sages, and establishing peace for all future generations." His remarks fully demonstrated the grand spiritual pursuit and noble social ideal of the Neo-Confucianists. They set the ultimate goal of life pursuit for later generations of Chinese scholar-officials. During the Southern Song Dynasty, *Shigong Zhi Xue* (Practical Matter Learning) rose in eastern Zhejiang, where overseas trade and commodity economy were relatively developed. The representatives of this school of thought included Lü Zuqian, Ye Shi, and Chen Liang. They were opposed to the empty talk of the mind with no regard for practical matters. They emphasized the transition from inner self-examination to "managing state affairs" and "becoming kingly in the outer sphere." They supported the idea of talking about kingliness in terms of practical matters to strengthen the monarchical power, revive the country, and recover lost territories. The idea of "being a doer instead of a talker" and "testing ethical principles with practicality" had practical significance at that time and profoundly impacted later generations of the Chinese.

7.3 Commercial Cities' Prosperity

The region of today's Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces became the country's economic center during the Song and Yuan dynasties. The national political center also shifted from the Guanzhong region (today's central Shaanxi Province) in the northwest to the eastern plains, with developed water and land transportation that made it easy to connect with the developed areas in the southeast. Since Dongjing (today's Kaifeng, Henan), the capital of the Northern Song Dynasty, sat at the strategically preferable location on the Bian River, the north-south traffic artery, the goods and grains from the southeastern cereal-producing areas can be directly transported to the capital by the waterway. Managed by several emperors of the Song Dynasty,

Dongjing had become a world-renowned international metropolis by the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In a long-take manner, the painting *Qingming Shang He Tu* (*Along the River During the Qingming Festival*) by the late Northern Song painter Zhang Zeduan gives a panoramic view of the free and prosperous commercial activities and rich urban life in the city at that time. The painting shows that Song cities differed from those of the Han and Tang dynasties in that they had freely operating shops and all kinds of thriving trades and professions. Functionally, the cities had changed from purely political and military centers to commodity-economy centers and logistics hubs. They became prototypes of modern cities opening to the outside world. Dongjing, the capital of the Northern Song Dynasty, had become the center in the east for traveling merchants from foreign countries, including Jewish immigrants. Hangzhou, Zhejiang, the capital of the Southern Song, had become the most prosperous world-class metropolis in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries under the management of the Southern Song rulers. Marco Polo, an Italian traveler, praised it as “the most beautiful and luxurious city worldwide.” In addition, cities such as Suzhou, Yangzhou, Chengdu, and Ezhou, located in economically developed areas or transportation hubs, had also grown into regional economic centers.

Behind the cities’ development were robust regional market networks, which were multi-layered and scattered from China to overseas. A local farmer’s cereal produce would be sold to the market, and the customer of a handicraft workshop might be found far away in East Africa, West Asia, and other places globally. The development of industry and commerce also gave birth to elements of a new business economy, such as credit, lending, and employment relationships. The growing number of people who specialized in industry and commerce formed a new social group. The Song Dynasty began to list the non-agricultural population as separate “citizen households” and collect real estate taxes. These systems all targeted at a particular group of people: the population detached from agricultural production, owned real estate, and lived in the cities for a long time. Later researchers mostly regarded them as the “citizen class.”

Unlike the previous dynasties, the Song Dynasty attached great importance to mercantilism. The government’s various economic policies centered on promoting the marketization of its economy to increase finance and taxation. The government policies of the Song Dynasty gradually substituted asset taxes for the previous property taxes and corvées, allowing the economic system to optimize the allocation of natural and human resources. The government formulated various policies to encourage industry and commerce and implemented all kinds of commercial taxes. Doing so turned the commercial profits of the whole society into one of the primary sources of government wealth. At the same time, the Song Dynasty became the first government in the world to use paper money to accumulate wealth. The Song Dynasty’s commercial economy was so developed that the transaction volume was too heavy for metal currency to handle. A paper currency similar to banknotes emerged accordingly. In the early years of the Northern Song Dynasty, merchants in Sichuan and other places began to use *jiaozi* (called *huizi* in the Southern Song Dynasty), a form of paper promissory notes, to replace iron cash coins. They were the first government-issued paper currency globally. The official promissory notes

issued in the Song Dynasty were different from the standard currency in the modern sense because the government did have reliable reserves for exchange. More often, it resulted from the advanced development of currency tax by the Song Dynasty government in response to the enormous fiscal expenditure. It was a wealth-grabbing measure taken by the government, which, deeply involved in commercial activities, exercised ultra-economic coercion.

7.4 Dadu of Yuan: Shaping the Center of a Unified Multi-ethnic State

Beijing, the capital of China today, once witnessed China's historical process of splitting, reviving from the flames of war, and re-emerging as a multi-ethnic country. Beijing had long been a frontier town for the dynasties on the Central Plains to keep northern nomads from coming south. It was also a transitional zone for the fusion of multi-ethnic cultures. The Liao and Jurchen Jin dynasties, rising from today's Northeast China, suddenly changed their course of expansion into the west as peoples of the northern steppes. They turned southward for growth, gradually developing the Tang Dynasty's north-border town Youzhou into the political center of their dynasties. It had evolved into Zhongdu (Central Capital), the best place in North China by the Jin Dynasty. The Central Capital's location was strategic as it "controlled the Yangtze and Huai river basins in the south and connected the desert areas in the north." It was convenient for the northern ethnic dynasties to rule over the Central Plains, the Northeast, and the grasslands. Later, it became the ideal site for a capital, where the Yuan Dynasty could unify China from the prairies and control the entire country.

The Mongolian tribes active in the frontier grasslands during the Liao and Jurchen Jin dynasties established the Mongol Empire (1206–1259) across the Eurasian continent in the thirteenth century. Eventually, the ruling family split due to ongoing internal strife. Kublai Khan, a grandson of Genghis Khan, established the Yuan Dynasty in China and ended the centuries' division since the end of the Tang Dynasty. He started another significant stage of developing a multi-ethnic nation in ancient China. Kublai Khan shifted the Mongol regime's ruling center from the grasslands to the land of the Han people. He built a new capital near the site of Jurchen Jin's Zhongdu in 1264 and named it Khanbaliq (Dadu of Yuan) in 1272. Dadu's construction went on and off for years and was finally completed in 1285.

Dadu of Yuan was built on a selected site north of Zhongdu (Central Capital) of the Jurchen Jin. It was called the North City, whereas Zhongdu was named the South City. The North City was where the emperor and aristocrats worked and lived. The South City was the residential quarters for the ordinary Han people and the industrial and commercial areas. The design of Dadu of Yuan followed the traditional concept prescribed in the *Book of Rites: Record of Trades*. It consisted of the Outer City and the Imperial City. The plan of the entire city was a square in a square. The layout

of Dadu of Yuan could be described as “three heads, six arms, and two feet.” It was said that it was shaped after the three-headed and six-armed mythic figure named Nezha. The three gates in the south represented the three heads, the six gates in the east and the west symbolized the six arms, and the two in the north signified the two feet. Flanking the north–south thoroughfare were the alleys running west and east side by side. Alley is called *hutong* in Chinese, and the word came from the Yuan Dynasty’s Mongolian language, “*huddug*,” which means “water well.” It evolved into the common noun for alleys in Beijing and almost everywhere in North China.

Like the architectural design of Dongjing (Kaifeng, Henan), the capital of the Song Dynasty, attention was also paid to urban water transportation systems in the design and construction of the Dadu of Yuan. The opening of the Tonghui River led the Grand Canal into the capital. Ships of goods could now enter straight into the Dadu of Yuan and dock at the pier at Jishuitan (Pond of Accumulated Water) in the Imperial City through Tongzhou. Dadu of Yuan became a significant hub for bringing all China’s resources together, attracting people from all over the world. Different sects of Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, and Nestorianism could preach in Dadu of Yuan and build houses of worship, many of which have survived till today. For example, the white stupa of the famous Miaoying Temple (or White Stupa Temple) in Beijing was designed and built by Anigo, a renowned Nepalese craftsman during the Kublai Khan period (Fig. 7.2).

The emperors of the Yuan Dynasty did not live in the Dadu of Yuan for long because they still stuck to the legacy of their nomadic politics: migrating between Dadu and Shangdu every year. Chinese historians call it the *liangdu xunxing* system (the emperor’s seasonal residence in the two capitals). Shangdu was located in today’s Jinlianchuan Prairie by the Shandian River in the Zhenglan Banner, Inner Mongolia. Developed from Kublai Khan’s Jinlianchuan Headquarters, it was completed between 1256 and 1259, named the Kaiping Headquarters, and promoted to Shangdu (Upper Capital) in 1263. While drawing on the ethnic Han’s traditional design with a square in a square, it also adhered to the steppe tribes’ tradition: having several buildings of the *orda* yurt style. Its location in the south of the Mongolian grasslands made it easy for the emperor to contact the tribal chiefs on the prairies. The emperors of the



Fig. 7.2 Dadu and Shangdu, Yuan Dynasty

Yuan Dynasty held the traditional Mongolian Kurultai Conference here to discuss state affairs with the Mongolian princes, dukes, and aristocrats. Therefore, it can be regarded as the political center, where the emperors of the Yuan Dynasty controlled the Mongolian steppe territories. The emperors of the Yuan Dynasty traveled from Dadu of Yuan to the north to spend the summer and returned to Dadu in winter, with most of the leading officials and advisors of the central government escorting him back and forth. The Yuan Dynasty's central government worked on the journey between the two capitals. The migration of a political center in four seasons was universal to the northern nomadic communities in ancient China. But only the Yuan Dynasty succeeded in having the two primary cultural regions, the Mongolian steppes and the Central Plains, under its control through this tradition of migration.

7.5 *Xingsheng*: An Institutional Practice of Governing a Multi-ethnic State

The Yuan Dynasty changed the *Jimi* policy of the Tang and Song dynasties while unifying the nation. It created a series of effective local administrative systems such as *xingsheng* by including the frontiers and the Central Plains into the same administrative management mechanism. By doing so, the Yuan Dynasty integrated the border regions and the Central Plains at the administrative divisional level for the first time in Chinese history, laying the foundation for a unified multi-ethnic China with provinces and regions like today.

Initially, *xingsheng* (literally “traveling province”) was abbreviated from *Daxingtai* or *Shangshu Daxingtai* (Branch Department of State Affairs). From the Wei and Jin dynasties to the Jurchen Jin Dynasty, it had always been a representative agency of the central government. While unifying the nation, Kublai Khan established the 11 *xingsheng* of Shaanxi, Sichuan, Gansu, Yunnan, Jiangszhe, Jiangxi, Huguang, Henan, Liaoyang, Lingbei, and Zhengdong, of which the first 10 were in China's current borders. Yuan's administrative structure had been finalized by the dynasty's first year, with Hebei, Shandong, and Shanxi called *fuli* (literally “in the belly”) under the direct jurisdiction of the *Zhongshusheng* (Central Secretariat). The 10 provinces were transformed into the highest local administrative bodies. In places farther away from “traveling provinces,” their representative agencies, *xuanweisi* (pacification commissions), were set up. The administrative divisions of *lu* (route), *fu* (superior prefecture), *zhou* (prefecture), and *xian* (district) were established under the “traveling provinces” and the pacification commissions. The *xingsheng* (“traveling provinces”) of the Yuan Dynasty enjoyed extensive and effective political, military, and economic jurisdiction. At the same time, they were also subjected to the central government's control, thus striking an ideal balance between centralism and regional separation of power and solving the drawback of excessive centralism and separation of power that had plagued the Tang and Song dynasties.

The Yuan Dynasty's explorative implementation of the policy and institutional practice of direct jurisdiction over the frontiers left contemporary China a precious legacy. After relocating its political center to the ethnic Han territory, the Yuan Dynasty gradually included the Mongolian steppes' vast "ancestral land" north of the Gobi into Lingbei, still with the various garrison and farming battalions of a thousand households under its jurisdiction. In the Northeast, the Yuan Dynasty set up the Dongjing *Xingsheng* in 1286, which was changed to Liaoyang *Xingsheng* later. Under its authority, prefectures and districts were established in the Han territory, whereas in the Jurchen people's habitats, brigades of ten thousand households each were founded. The limits of jurisdiction covered the area from Liaoning to Sakhalin in the western Pacific. The Yuan Dynasty strengthened its governance of the regions north and south of the Tianshan in the northwest. Kublai Khan set up the chief military command of the Woduan (today's Hotan) Pacification Commission south of the Tianshan. He later established the Pacification Commission's chief military commands in the Bieshibali (today's Jimsar in Xinjiang) and other prefectures north of the Tianshan. In 1295, Emperor Chengzong of Yuan set up two chief military commands, one in Quxiantalin (Küšän Tarim, in today's Kuqa and Tarim, Xinjiang) and the other in Beiting (today's Beiting Town in Jimsar, Xinjiang). The Uihur people and those from Hami, Woduan, and Kashgar were the ancestors of today's Uyghur ethnic group, all under the Yuan Dynasty's political control along with the Karluks, the Mongols, and the ethnic Han at that time. The Yuan Dynasty enforced the *gaitu guiliu* (transforming minority ethnic chieftains into district administrations) policy, established *xingsheng*, and abolished the previous tribal 1000-household battalions and 10,000-household brigades to turn them into what had been implemented in the Central Plains: routes, superior prefectures, prefectures, and districts. In some unique areas, the Yuan Dynasty set up pacification commands with their officials directly appointed by the central government and under its jurisdiction. At the same time, local tribal chiefs in some remote areas were still allowed to keep their hereditary positions.

The Yuan was a dynasty in Chinese history that also made achievements in managing coastal areas and territorial seas. In conquering the southern regions, the Yuan Dynasty made more effort to police the coast, locating *xunjiansi* (police offices) in strategic points like sea lanes and coastal port cities to maintain maritime transport safety. In the fourth year of Kublai Khan's reign (1260–1294), the Yuan Dynasty set up the Penghu *Xunjiansi* on the Penghu Islands, collecting salt tax and administering Taiwan and the Penghu Islands.

The Tubo empire on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau during the Tang Dynasty fell apart in the ninth century, and Tibetan Buddhism gradually became an influential institution. At the invitation of Godan, the son of Ogedei Khagan of the Mongol Empire, Sakya Pandita, the spiritual leader of the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism, came to Godan's royal court in Liangzhou in 1246. They came to an agreement, which eventually brought the Tibetan region under the control of the Mongol Empire. After establishing the Yuan Dynasty, Kublai Khan honored Sakya Pandita's nephew Drogon Chogyal Phagpa as the emperor's teacher. He continued to promote the construction of the administrative system in Xizang by cooperating with

Tibetan Buddhism. In 1264, the Yuan Dynasty established the *Zongzhiyuan* (Supreme Control Commission), which was later changed to *Xuanzhengyuan* (Commission for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs), with Drogon Chogyal Phagpa being the pluralizing leader. The Supreme Control Commission was the highest leading institution of Buddhism in China, with Tubo under its direct jurisdiction. On its basis, the Commission for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs enjoyed a much higher status because it was on par with the Secretariat. Its staffing and communications involved the emperor directly. The commission founded the regional Sakya regime and the 100,000-household Ü-Tsang system. The chief executive of the Sakya regime also headed the Ü-Tsang's pacification commission. Its administered area included today's Lhasa, Shigatse, and Ngari regions. Later, the Yuan Dynasty also set up the Dokham, Tuosima, and Ü-Tsang pacification commissions, known as the "Three Chol-khas," under the direct administration of the Supreme Control Commission. Xizang thus became a formal administrative region under the direct control of the Chinese government.

7.6 A Brilliant Era of Cultural and Technological Prosperity

The all-round socioeconomic development in the Song and Yuan Dynasties not only added a people-oriented touch and practical concern to the social culture but also promoted the innovative development of science and technology. Accordingly, ancient Chinese culture and technology rose to another peak.

The political thinking and ideology of the scholar-officials shaped the development direction of the elite culture in the Song Dynasty. Apart from reasoning, expressing patriotism, and showing concerns about reality, they also excelled in art and literary creation, making achievements in prose, poetry, and painting. Where essays were concerned, the intellectual elites emphasized moral principles and the "application of classics to practical matters." A famous Movement of the Revolution of Poetry and Prose emerged in the Northern Song Dynasty to reject superfluous and flippant writing styles. Ouyang Xiu, Wang Anshi, Zeng Gong, Su Xun, Su Shi, and Su Zhe inherited the traditions of Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan of the Tang Dynasty and advocated a new style of prose that was easy, natural, and fluent. They also greatly improved ancient prose and literary theory. These men of letters were referred to in history as the "Eight Masters of the Tang and Song." The poems and *ci*-poems of the Song Dynasty were the primary tools for the intellectual elites to express their rational reasoning and show their concerns about reality. The Song *ci*-poetry originated from the folk *yanyue* (entertainment songs) lyrics in the Sui and Tang dynasties. The intellectual elites of the Song Dynasty crafted them into an elegant literary form, making them an iconic symbol of the Song-dynasty literature. The Song scholars also wrote regular poems. But, unlike the Tang poets, who mostly expressed their personal feelings, their Song counterparts tended to use the literary

form to reason and promote their thoughts. Through either regular or *ci*-poems, they demonstrated their observation of people's sufferings and expressed their patriotism regarding the fight against foreign enemies and the recovery of lost territories. The *ci*-poems of the Song Dynasty are so outstanding that the later generations regard them as comparable to the Tang poems.

The Song Dynasty also witnessed the heyday of traditional Chinese painting. Almost all genres of traditional Chinese painting were established or perfected in the Song Dynasty. Significant achievements were made in court and other genres of painting. Especially after the middle of the Northern Song Dynasty, the Southern School, more popularly known as the "literati painting," in which the scholar-officials expressed their aspirations and feelings, became a new trend. The "literati painting" expressed personal mood and character, highlighted humanism, and pursued the "unity of poetry and painting" rather than emphasizing realism. It fully applied and explained the aesthetic principle of traditional Chinese painting, which advocates "more virtual than real and more hidden than revealed."

The prosperity of the urban economy promoted the development of popular culture. *Washe* (literally "tiled shelter") became the primary venue where urban residents enjoyed the newly emerging theatrical performances. They included *huaben* (novella written in vernacular language), *zhugong diao* (a kind of ballad), *zaju* (a form of opera), and *nanxi* (another form of opera). These forms of performing art gave rise to the *sanqu* (non-dramatic songs) and *zaju* (poetic drama) in the Yuan Dynasty, known together as the Qu of Yuan or *Yuanqu* to the later generations. *Sanqu* was a combination of various talking-and-singing forms such as *xiaodiao* (popular tunes), *daqu* (multi-movement musical works), and *guzici* (drum lyrics). *Zaju* was a theatrical art form integrating talking and singing performances with dancing based on the drama script of the Jin Dynasty and the *zhugong diao* ballads. In late Jin and early Yuan dynasties, the displaced intellectuals, or those who had failed or had no access to the imperial examinations, penned *sanqu* and *zaju* scripts to make a living. Without their knowledge, they created a new literary genre comparable to the Tang and Song *Ci* poems. Their representatives, Guan Hanqing, Wang Shifu, and Ma Zhiyuan, were the most famous. The drama scripts they authored, such as *Dou E Yuan* (*Snow in Midsummer*) and *Xixiang Ji* (*Romance of the Western Chamber*), were outstanding examples of the *zaju* of the Yuan Dynasty. In the middle and late Yuan Dynasty, most of the playwrights and actors in the north moved south of the Yangtze River, causing the decline of *zaju*. Later, *nanxi* rose in the Ming and Qing dynasties to become the predecessor of today's Chinese operas. Enjoying equal fame, the Qu of Yuan, the Tang poems, and the Song *Ci*-poetry are all treasures in the history of ancient Chinese literature.

Another noticeable sign of popular culture's development in the Song and Yuan dynasties was that printed books became widespread. Woodblock printing was highly developed in the Song Dynasty, immensely stimulating the publishing business. Four printing centers gradually emerged in Kaifeng, Hangzhou, Chengdu, and Jianyang (today's Jianyang District, Nanping, Fujian Province), and books became commonplace in society. Official and private book collection and editing prevailed, and many famed book collectors and centers appeared. The prosperous endeavors of book

publishing and collecting helped popularize knowledge directly. General education centers were also famous depots of books. The Song Dynasty's book printing quality was so exquisite that "a page of a surviving Song-dynasty-printed book today is worth a tael of gold."

The all-round development of the social and cultural fields in the Song and Yuan dynasties led to a glorious era in the history of scientific and technological advancement in ancient China. Moveable type, gunpowder, and the compass, three of the "Four Great Inventions" of ancient China, were perfected and widely used during this period. As woodblock printing conformed to the layout design of Chinese characters and met the requirements for easy preservation and reproducibility, it had always been dominant in ancient China. But the exploration of new technologies in the printing industry had never been stopped. The clay movable type printing technique invented by Bi Sheng in the Northern Song Dynasty in the eleventh century was about 400 years earlier than the lead movable type printing innovated by Johannes Gutenberg from Germany, the originator of modern movable type printing. Gunpowder began to be widely used in military activities during the Song and Yuan dynasties, and the invention and application of weapons using gunpowder reached a climax. The *Wujing Zongyao* (*Complete Essentials for the Military Classics*), completed in the middle of the Northern Song Dynasty, had three gunpowder recipes, which was the earliest record of gunpowder production in the world. At the same time, China had mastered the technology of magnetizing metal pointers, able to manufacture compasses for actual navigation. The Chinese kept researching the techniques and methods of supporting compasses. Shen Kuo, a famous scholar in the Northern Song Dynasty, discussed his eponymous "four methods." The pivot-supported "dry compass" was used in the Southern Song Dynasty and became the prototype of modern compasses (Fig. 7.3).

Fig. 7.3 Compass-holding figurine, pottery, Southern Song Dynasty



With the support of developed industry and commerce, the three major ancient Chinese shipbuilding technology inventions, namely rudders, keels, and watertight compartments, had already matured and perfected, leading the world then. The Song and Yuan dynasties' ships enjoyed strong maritime self-sustainability with their solid structure, which provided a reliable guarantee for China's overseas trade. The Chinese rudder was introduced to Europe via the Arab world in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The watertight compartment structure standard in modern shipbuilding did not attract the attention of the West until the eighteenth century.

7.7 The Silk Road Connecting China to the World

The development of the ancient Chinese Silk Road peaked during the Song and Yuan dynasties, when China's world vision and international influence were further expanded. After the tenth century, the Hexi Corridor's integration and interaction with the multi-ethnic Western Regions jointly promoted the east-west connectivity of the Land Silk Road. Western Xia, Kara-Khoja, Kingdom of Hotan, the Kara-Khanid Khanate, and the Kara Khitai (Western Liao) established by the Khitans after their westward migration became the leading intermediaries connecting ancient China and Central Asia. They promoted the entrepot trade and cultural ties between the Central Plains dynasties and the West. The successive rise of the nomadic Donghu Mongols and Khitans pushed the development of the Silk Road to its apex. The Mongol Empire put all the essential parts of the Silk Road from the east to the west under its unified control. By doing so, the empire pulled together the original segmented spheres of entrepot trade and established the “*zhanchi*” (postal relay station) system. With the Yuan Dynasty's capital at the center, it led all the way to Central Asia, West Asia, and Europe. The character “*zhan*” in the Chinese words *chezhan* (bus or train station) and *yizhan* (stage station) was a transliteration of the Mongolian term “*am*,” meaning “station.” The postal relay station system shortened the distance between the East and the West, making this period the most prosperous era of Sino-foreign exchange.

With the prosperity of the Silk Road and the expansion of Chinese cultural influence, the national name “Khitan” replaced “Taugast” to refer to China in the Eurasian world. When the Middle-Age European missionaries and travelers went to China along the Silk Road pioneered by the Mongol Empire, the first thing they encountered was the appellation “Khitan.” Catholic priests Giovanni da Pian del Carpine and Guillaume de Rubrouck came to Karakorum, the capital of the Mongol Empire, from France as envoys in the thirteenth century. When they returned, they introduced the word “Khitan” to the European cultural vision. Then, the European cultural circles started an upsurge of traveling to the eastern world. Accounts of travels written by travelers like Marco Polo from Italy exposed the Europeans to the prosperity of this “Khitan” nation, arousing the Westerners' great interest in exploring the East. It is said that Columbus carried *The Travels of Marco Polo* in his luggage when he set out to explore the East in the fifteenth century.

The unobstructed access to the Silk Road facilitated the westward dissemination of many vital sciences and technologies. Among them, gunpowder technology, one of the “Four Great Inventions” of ancient China, was introduced to Europe then. Technologies of military gunpowder and firearms widely used in the confrontation between the Song and Jin dynasties were introduced to Europe during the Mongol Invasion of Central Asia. A Polish historian called the wooden barrels firing rockets used by the Mongol army the “Chinese fire-breathing dragons.” Then, the Ilkhanate established by the Mongol Empire in West Asia spread Chinese gunpowder production and other technologies to the Arab world and Western Europe. During the war with the Arabs, the Europeans gradually improved gunpowder and firearm manufacturing technologies, quickening the Europe’s steps to get out of the Middle Ages and start the early modern industrial civilization.

The technological development from woodblock printing to movable type continuously influenced the world through the Silk Road, representing another contribution the ancient China made to the evolution of world civilizations. Metal moveable type was developed during the reign of Wang Geon of Goryeo on the Korean Peninsula and used to print Buddhist scriptures. In the thirteenth century, Persia not only introduced the Chinese printing process and put it into practical use but also applied Chinese technology to printing paper money. The Chinese character “*chao*” (banknote) was incorporated into the Persian language. Noel Joseph Terence Montgomery Needham, a British historian of science and sinologist, holds that the sudden appearance of European religious prints and woodblock-printed books in the fourteenth century was also closely related to the cultural exchange between China and the West during this period.

The development of the commodity economy and handicraft industry along the Southeast coastal areas during the Song and Yuan dynasties was an impetus to the prosperity of the Maritime Silk Road. Starting from Song Dynasty, specialized production areas began to develop in the agriculture and handicraft industry, able to directly supply the demands of the world market. China reached such a degree of commercialization two to three centuries earlier than any of the countries in Western Europe. The worldwide market demand galvanized the development of China’s maritime shipping. The extensive use of compass technology in seagoing commercial fleet navigation enabled the Arabs to introduce the prototype of the modern compass, the “dry compass,” into Europe before it was steadily developed into the compass in the modern sense.

At that time, the Chinese commercial fleet had developed a trade base from the southeast coast to Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean and was directly connected with the Arabian Persian Gulf. Porcelains from the five famous kilns in China, namely Ru, Guan, Ge, Jun, and Ding, were exported to more than 50 countries in West Asia, Africa, and Europe by sea. The active Maritime Silk Road trade enabled trade cities along the southeast coast of China to prosper, and the most representative of them was Quanzhou, Fujian. Quanzhou was known to the West as the “city of *Erythrina variegata*.” As the world-famous largest trading port in East Asia then, the city attracted tens of thousands of foreign merchants to settle or travel therein. To

this day, tombstones and epitaphs of people from Persia, Arabia, Syria, and Turkey can still be unearthed in Quanzhou.

Many navigators emerged from the prosperous maritime trade, bridging the Song Dynasty with the Southeast and South Asian countries. Pu Shougeng and his Arab family assisted the Southern Song and Yuan dynasties in conducting exchange with Southeast Asian countries such as Annam, Chiem Thanh (a kingdom in today's central Vietnam), and Brunei. Yihmish, a Uighur, and Yang Tingbi, a Han people, were dispatched by the Yuan Dynasty's emperor to set out on several voyage missions. They traveled all over the southwest coast of India and the Indonesian archipelago and persuaded the countries there to establish links with the Yuan Dynasty. The maritime activities of these navigators and envoys significantly broadened ancient China's world vision. Take Zhou Daguan, for example. In 1295, he was sent on a diplomatic mission to the Dynasty of Angkor in ancient Cambodia. His *Zhenla Fengtu Ji* (*The Customs of Cambodia*) has become the primary written document of the Dynasty of Angkor. Wang Dayuan traveled to the countries bordering the South China Sea twice. He recorded the sights and sounds of 220 countries and regions in Asia, Africa, and Europe and delineated the mountains, rivers, landscapes, and natural resources as far as East Africa.

Chapter 8

The Ming-Qing Civilization



Siwu Wu

The Ming-Qing civilization was the period when the Chinese civilization reached its peak in the traditional society. China's Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) lasted for 540 years with stable regimes, a vast territory, a surge in population, and tremendous progress in material wealth. The Ming Dynasty set its capital in Nanjing in its early days and moved to Beijing later. Institutional civilization continued to develop during the Ming and Qing dynasties, and outstanding achievements were made in art and literature. The government sponsored the compilation of *Yongle Dadian* (*The Yongle Encyclopedia*) and *Siku Quanshu* (*Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature*). Non-government publications also flourished with the emergence of the “Four Classic Novels” that have a place in world literature: *Sanguo Yanyi* (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*), *Shuihu Zhuan* (*Water Margin*), *Xiyou Ji* (*Journey to the West*), and *Honglou Meng* (*Dream of the Red Mansion*). During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the cultural exchange between China and the West became closer. The scope, content, breadth, and depth of the exchange were unprecedented. From the middle of the eighteenth century, Chinese civilization encountered enormous challenges from Western cultures as Western capitalist countries engaged in aggression and colonization worldwide. China was humiliated, its people inflicted with miseries, and the Chinese civilization covered with dust. In the face of adversity, China's advanced intellectuals began to reflect on themselves and learn from Western culture. The Chinese civilization gradually transformed in the face of challenges. It kept growing while integrating other cultures, showing its tenacity, vitality, and strength.

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X. Bu (ed.), *The History of Chinese Civilization*, China Insights,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7125-1_8

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8.1 Zheng He's Voyages to the Western Seas

Peasant uprisings broke out everywhere at the end of the Yuan Dynasty. Zhu Yuanzhang, a Buddhist monk when he was young, participated in the peasant war, fought in the north and south on many fronts, and established the Ming Dynasty. In its early years, the Ming Dynasty implemented policies to recover from the social upheavals to develop the economy and increase the population. It carried out peace diplomacy in foreign relations and expanded tributary trade, making Ming China increasingly powerful.

After Zhu Yuanzhang's death, his grandson succeeded him as Emperor Jianwen. Before long, however, Zhu Di, the fourth son of Zhu Yuanzhang, staged a coup d'état, overthrew Emperor Jianwen, and moved the capital to Beijing. China became stronger. The emperor of Ming dispatched Zheng He to make voyages overseas several times to expand overseas trade. But some scholars argue that the emperor's purpose was to find the missing Emperor Jianwen. Zheng He's travel overseas per the emperor's order was known in history as "Zheng He's Voyages to the Western Seas." Incidentally, the "Western Seas" was a generic term for the maritime space west of the South China Sea, including India and the west coast of Africa.

Zheng He's voyage to the Western Seas was a significant event in the history of world navigation. Zheng He was born Ma He in a Muslim Hui family. He entered Emperor Hongwu's court and followed Zhu Di, Prince of Yan, in years of fighting with miraculous merits. For that, Emperor Chengzu conferred the surname Zheng upon him. He was also referred to as the "Grand Eunuch of the Three Jewels." Zheng He and his fleet started the first voyage in the 6th lunar month of the 3rd year of the Yongle era (1405). After praying to Goddess Mazu in the Palace of the Goddess of the Sea, the fleet set out from the Liujia Port in Taicang, Suzhou. It sailed first to Zhancheng (today's central Vietnam) and entered the Indian Ocean through the Malacca Straits before reaching Calicut (today's Kozhikode, a city in southern India). He and his fleet returned to Nanjing in the 9th lunar month of the 5th year of the Yongle era, finishing the two-year-and- three-month voyage. Zheng He's fleet was advanced in technology and large in scale. It comprised 62 large ships on its first voyage, with a crew of about 27,800 people and advanced navigation charts and equipment such as compasses with magnetized needles. With about a length of about 138 m and a width of about 56 m, the "treasure ship" Zheng He took was the largest wooden sailing vessel in the world at that time. It is noteworthy that Zheng He made six more voyages in the following two decades. The seven voyages can be divided into two phases: primarily carrying out peaceful trade activities in Southeast Asia during the first three voyages and going to the Arab countries and as far as the east coast of Africa in the last four trips (Fig. 8.1).

Zheng He's voyages to the Western Seas built a bridge of friendship between the Asian and African countries. It helped Ming China establish a China-led, peaceful maritime international order in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea by eliminating pirates, restraining the strong and supporting the weak, and upholding justice. According to Ma Huan's *Yingya Shenglan* (*The Overall Survey of the Ocean's*



Fig. 8.1 Zheng He's Voyage

Shores), upon arriving at each place, Zheng He would read the imperial edict and establish a diplomatic relationship with the country on the territory. He and his fleet treated all the countries they visited equally. Zheng He's fleet promoted Chinese culture and peaceful diplomacy along the way. His ships were loaded with silk, cotton, porcelain, ironware, tea, and other commodities, which, traded fairly, were loved by people everywhere. As Fei Xin documented in his *Xingcha Shenglan* (*The Overall Survey of the Star Raft*), the countries west of the South China Sea were rich in natural resources such as precious metals and stones, rare fauna and flora, as well as ivory, spices, and timber. They were the primary goods for which Zheng He's fleet traded. The crew took the zebras from Dhofar for the Chinese mythic animal *qilin* and brought one back to China. Various countries also sent streams of envoys to China for trade. The sultans of the Malacca Sultanate and the Sultanate of Sulu even visited China, bringing their family members and entourages. In the 21st year of the Yongle era (1423), over 1200 envoys from 16 countries west of the South China Sea gathered in Beijing. They included Calicut, Kochi, Cail, Sumatra, and Malacca.

Zheng He's seven voyages to the Western seas lifted the curtain on the exploring voyages of the Eastern and Western worlds in the fifteenth century. Half a century later, the West began its endeavors to open up new shipping routes, and the world entered the era of ocean development. Unfortunately, China's overseas voyages were halted due to several reasons. They included corrupted domestic politics and declining national power, coupled with opposition from both the ruler and the people that substantial financial resources were wasted on the voyages that shortchanged China itself in the tributary trading activities. However, private overseas trade was still booming.

8.2 The Beginning of Globalization

The Ming Dynasty reached a new stage in developing China's material civilization. Unprecedented achievements were made in its agriculture and handicraft industry, making them occupy a significant position in the world economic system.

By the late Ming Dynasty, corn and sweet potatoes, originating in the Americas, had been introduced into China, significantly increasing grain output per unit area. Rice cultivation had been steadily promoted in the north, and the country's total grain output steadily increased. The planting area of cash crops such as cotton, mulberry leaves, tobacco, and peanuts continued to expand. Handicraft industries like iron smelting and porcelain making developed rapidly. The ironware from Zunhua in Hebei and Foshan in Guangdong and the chinaware from Jingdezhen were known far and wide. There were over a hundred iron producers in China. Among them, the smelter in Zunhua measured about four meters deep and smelted more than 1000 kg of ore each time. Jingdezhen was home to numerous porcelain kilns, with 58 government-run and 900 privately-owned. The silk weaving and cotton-textile industry in Jiangnan were highly developed. On average, in the Songjiang area (part of Shanghai today), each resident produced a bolt of silk fabric daily, with a total output of 10,000 bolts daily. A popular saying went at that time, "There's always more than enough silk fabric produced in Songjiang than you can buy; there's always more than enough yarn spun in Weitang than you can collect." The production of raw silk was highly prosperous in Jiangnan. The Huzhou Silk was sought after by all traders, and the Qili Silk from Nanxun Town was all the more world-famous.

With the expansion of handicrafts and commerce, the division of labor in commodity production was further sharpened, and specialized wage workers appeared in many cities. Specialized machine workshops and dyeing workshops appeared in Suzhou's textile industry, employing thousands of workers. The number of employees in the porcelain industry in Jingdezhen reached tens of thousands. Subsequently, many industrial and commercial towns appeared in Jiangnan, such as Shengze and Zhenze towns in Suzhou, Puyuan Town in Jiaying, Shuanglin and Linghu towns in Huzhou, and Fengjing Town in Songjiang. A small village with only 50–60 households in the early Ming Dynasty, Shengze had become a town of more than 50,000 residents famed for its silk-weaving industry by the end of the dynasty. Shuanglin Town in Huzhou was renowned for its silk-reeling industry. It had only a few hundred households in the early Ming Dynasty and had developed into a city with a population of 16,000 by the end of the Ming. In the Ming Dynasty, the commercial capital was also rapidly developed, and many famous merchants appeared, such as those from Huizhou and Shanxi. A specific citizen class was gradually taking shape. The vernacular fiction represented by "*Sanyan Erpai*" (literally "Three Words and Two Strikes") reflected the growing prosperity of the citizen culture of the Ming Dynasty. "*Sanyan*" refers to the vernacular novels by Feng Menglong—*Yushi Mingyan* (*Stories to Enlighten the World*), *Jingshi Tongyan* (*Stories to Caution the World*), and *Xingshi Hengyan* (*Stories to Awaken the World*). "*Erpai*"

refers to those by Ling Mengchu—*Chuke Pai'an Jingqi* (*Striking the Table in Amazement, First Collection*) and *Erke Pai'an Jingqi* (*Striking the Table in Amazement, Second Collection*).

The way the Ming economy participated in world trade also changed quietly. The non-governmental overseas commercial activities in the coastal areas began to break through the traditional tributary trade pattern and move toward an all-round commodity trade exchange mode. Chinese maritime merchants actively participated in global trade, leaving their footprints all over the Southeast Asian countries and regions west of the South China Sea. Macao became a critical starting point for the Ming Dynasty's participation in world trade. The Portuguese occupied Macao in the 32nd year of the Jiajing era (1553). After taking over the Philippines, the Spaniards' sailing ships transported a large quantity of pepper, hematoxylin, ivory, sandalwood, and the silver they had plundered in the Americas to Macao, where they traded them for raw silk and silk fabric. Then, they shipped them to Nagasaki, Japan, for sale. After selling them for silver there, they returned to Macao to purchase Chinese raw silk, porcelain, and other goods. Afterward, they took them across the Pacific on Spanish ships to Mexico to exchange for silver, thus forming a unique trade route—the Pacific Silk Road. Chinese commodities thus entered the world market in large quantities and became essential to the global economic and trade network.

The Ming Dynasty was superior in overseas trade, and a large amount of silver entered the domestic market. According to scholars' statistics, about 200 million pesos of Spanish silver coins entered China from 1572 to 1821. Japan's annual inflow of silver into China was as much as 530,000 taels from 1530 to 1570, and the amount of silver flowing into China from the Americas between the late 16th and the early seventeenth centuries was about 57–86 tons annually. The large inflow of silver accelerated the monetization of the domestic commodity economy and promoted the development of new productive forces. The aggregate amount of the Ming Dynasty's enormous economy became an essential reservoir in developing the world's economic network, an efficient link connecting the global trade's production and market, and a vital force for the start of globalization.

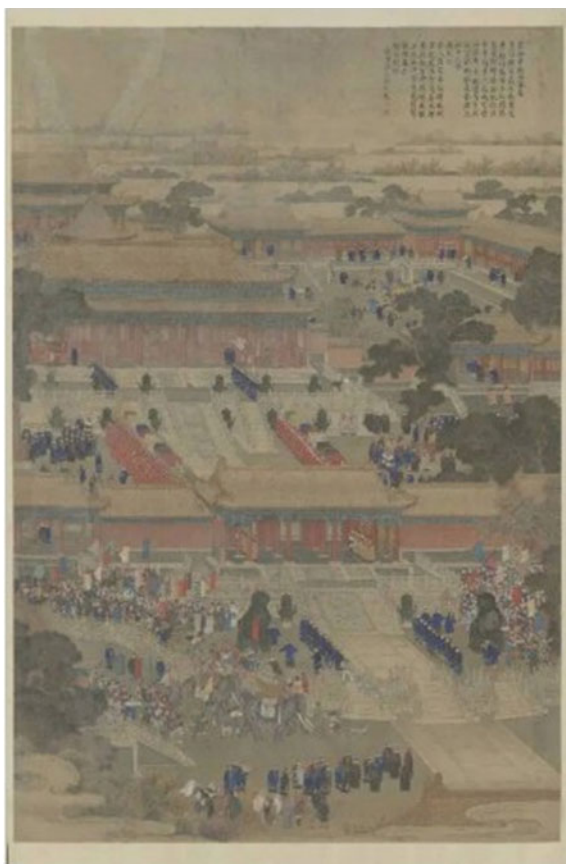
8.3 The High Qing Era

Inheriting the Ming system, the Qing Dynasty saw its material and institutional civilizations develop significantly. The sense of community in the Chinese nation further strengthened. After reunifying China, the Qing Dynasty gradually changed its original ethnic discrimination and oppression policy, slowly easing social and ethnic conflicts. Especially after the reigns of outstanding monarchs such as Emperors Kangxi and Qianlong, a rare phenomenon of prosperity appeared in the Qing Dynasty known as the “*Kang-Qian Shengshi*” (“A Prosperous Age of Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong”).

The political ideal of grand unification that the Chinese people had pursued for thousands of years had finally materialized by the Qing Dynasty and resulted in

the vast territory that China enjoys today. During the High Qing period, the Qing Dynasty maintained stable and effective political jurisdiction and military control over the vast domain spanning the regions on both sides of the Great Wall, the areas on both sides of the Gobi, the expansive Western Regions, the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, Taiwan with the Penghu Islands, and the South China Sea islands. Economic and cultural bonds closely linked the Han people in the inland and the ethnic minorities in the frontier regions. The exchange, communication, and blending of various ethnic peoples reached a new height in history. The Qing Dynasty achieved unprecedented economic prosperity, and its population repeatedly set new record highs. The population exceeded 200 million for the first time in the 27th year during the reign of Qianlong (1762) and surpassed 300 million in the 55th year during the Qianlong era (1790). The total population increased by a hefty 10 million within half a century. For a century, China fed about 30% of the world's population with about one billion *mu* (about today's 614,400 square kilometers) of arable land, ensuring long-term stability and prosperity (Fig. 8.2).

Fig. 8.2 *Foreign missions paying tribute*



The Kang-Qian period was a time when the world economy accelerated. The Chinese economy played a non-negligible role in the world economy and its aggregate growth. China's traditional manufacturing industries, such as satin, raw silk, tea, and porcelain, maintained a leading position worldwide and occupied an important place in South Asia, Japan, and Central Asia. They were also sold far away to Europe and the Americas. According to scholars' statistics, until the end of the eighteenth century, China's share of the world's total manufacturing output was still more than five percentage points higher than that of the entire European total, which was about eight times that of the United Kingdom, six times that of Russia, and nine times that of Japan. Some scholars claim that China was still dominant, if not at the center, in the world economy before the nineteenth century. The Qing Dynasty enjoyed enormous ruling power, filling its treasury to the rim. At that time, the country's total annual fiscal revenue was about 40 million taels of silver, and the silver inventory of the Ministry of Revenue was often around 60–70 million taels in the dynasty's heyday. To maintain the dynastic rule and prepare for disaster-relief, the imperial court built colossal granaries, with stored grains reaching more than 40 million *dan* (1 *dan* equaled 71.616 kg in the Qing Dynasty). When disasters occurred, the imperial court not only used the national power to allocate grains from all over the country but also tapped into *caoliang* without hesitation. It achieved long-term social ability by doing so. Incidentally, *caoliang* was grains and beans collected as tax from the southeastern part of China for consumption by the court and payment to officials and the military.

The High Qing era witnessed some institutional innovations, including *tanding rumu* (integrating the poll tax into field tax). The government promulgated policies to increase the population, promised never to raise taxes, and stopped imposing corvées on a per capita basis. These policies freed the peasants from their bondage to some extent. The Qing Dynasty implemented a system of secretly designating the crown prince to ensure a smooth transition of supreme power. It innovated the memorial submission system to strengthen the ties between the central and local governments. Remarkably, the reporting system regarding the rain, snow, and pricing of grains helped the court learn about agricultural activities and weather conditions, so as to handle state affairs better. To adapt governance to the characteristics and customs of ethnic minority areas, the imperial court set up the *Lifanyuan* (Court of Colonial Affairs) with dedicated offices. While adhering to centralism, the Qing government established military commands on the vast frontiers. This regional political and military system differed from the *xingsheng* system because it had generals or commanders-in-chief for direct management by the central government. At the same time, the Qing Dynasty set up the *meng-qi* (league-banner) system in Mongolia according to its regional conditions. It was the Qing's grassroots management system designed for Mongolia. A basic administrative and military unit called *qi* (banner) was established in each territory. Several banners were organized into a *meng* (league) modeled after the Qing Dynasty's Eight Banners organizational principles, and their formation was subjected to the approval of the Court of Colonial Affairs. The Qing court established a Kashag system in Xizang, a local regime with four officials holding the title Kalon under the jurisdiction of the Grand Minister Resident of

Xizang and the Dalai Lama. The Kashag was responsible for all the administrative affairs of Xizang. In Southern Xinjiang, the Qing Dynasty set up the *beg* management system. Beg was the Uyghur transliteration of an official's title. In the middle of his reign, Emperor Qianlong kept the title's name but changed the position from being hereditary to being appointed. Begs were divided into various ranks and reported to the central government's accredited officials. In the Southwest region, the Qing government enforced the *gaitu guiliu* policy. It was a move to reform the local administrative system in the ethnic minority areas during the Ming and Qing dynasties by abolishing local hereditary chiefs and replacing them with government-appointed officials. The best results were achieved in the policy during Emperor Yongzheng's reign.

In addition, during the Kang-Qian period, the Qing Dynasty implemented a policy of friendship and good-neighborliness with the contiguous states, not only maintaining normal tributary trade with Korea, Japan, and the Ryukyu Islands but also maintaining contact with Annam and other places, allowing the countries west of the South China Sea to come to China. As a result, the tributary trade reached a new height.

8.4 Yangmingism and *Kaoju*

In the Ming and Qing dynasties, the intellectual and cultural fronts were surging forward as society and economy thrived. Scholars either put forward new theories, as in the case of Wang Yangming's Learning of the Heart-and-Mind, shortened as in the case of Yangmingism, or systematically sorted out traditional learnings, such as the *kaoju* effort of the Qian-Jia School.

The Cheng-Zhu School of Neo-Confucianism, the official school of thought of the Ming Dynasty, was seen as appropriating others' ideas as their own and therefore making no contributions to learning.

Yangmingism rose based on this argument. Wang Yangming's personal name was Shouren, and he called himself Yangmingzi, while others referred to him as Master Yangming. He was born in Yuyao, Zhejiang. He followed Cheng-Zhu's theory of *gewu qiongli* (investigating things and exhausting principles) when he was young. He observed some bamboo for seven days but failed to find any of the truths taught by the sages. After taking office, he was relegated and exiled to Longchang in Guizhou after offending the eunuch Liu Jin. Reflecting on himself in remote seclusion and poverty, he came to a sudden realization. Later, he was dispatched to suppress a rebellion in Jiangxi, where he gradually developed the heart-and-mind thinking system based on understanding the mind through practice. Wang Yangming inherited Lu Jiuyuan's *Xinxue*, which advocated uniting the mind (*xin*) with the Way (*li*). Also influenced by the Zen sect of Buddhism, he opposed the Cheng-Zhu School's idea of principles being outside the mind. He advocated *zhixing heyi* ("the unity of knowledge and action") and *zhiliangzhi* ("extension of innate knowledge"). Yangmingism believed everyone could become a sage, stressing the inner self's peacefulness and

inward exploration to overcome and eliminate objective plight. Yangmingism was a big shock to the Cheng-Zhu School of Neo-Confucianism, which attached great importance to “Three Cardinal Guides and Five Constant Virtues.”

Yangmingism impacted the intellectual circles of the late Ming Dynasty so profoundly that it garnered a strong following and was carried forward. For example, Wang Gen, a member of the Taizhou School, enhanced Yangmingism. He advocated the idea of *zaoming* (creating destiny), believing that the individual could change the social environment. He emphasized that the Way of the sages was how ordinary people acted daily, thus civilianizing Confucianism. A famous thinker, Li Zhi, was deeply influenced by Yangmingism and argued that everyday human actions like “donning clothes and eating food were the natural order of things.” He attached importance to the pursuit of individuality and freedom of action. Notably, he suggested questioning Confucian classics and not using Confucius’ quotes as standards. His argument showed that opposition to traditional bondage and old ethnics reached a new height.

Unfortunately, Yangmingism eventually became empty and fantasy talks. “Talking about the mind while twiddling the thumbs in peacetime / Committing suicide to repay the monarch’s favor in danger.” This poetic line portrayed the Yangmingists’ attitude of caring nothing about the national economy and people’s livelihood. Gu Yanwu attributed the demise of the Ming Dynasty to Wang Gen’s school of thought. His criticism might have gone too far, but it undoubtedly pointed out the school’s predicament. In the early Qing Dynasty, the regime gradually stabilized. The imperial court implemented a policy of grand unification, honored both Confucianism and Taoism, and resumed the practice of selecting officials through *keju*. Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism once again became mainstream in intellectual circles. Wary of ethnic Han scholars, the Qing rulers imprisoned and persecuted many scholars on account of literary offense, wittingly driving many outstanding intellectuals away from discussing the mind. These intellectuals then devoted themselves to sorting classics and conducting textual research and editing to correct their errors, hoping to systematically summarize the academic development experience since the Han Dynasty. Thus, the Qian-Jia School, characterized by textual research, came into being.

The Qian-Jia School attached importance to the research methods of *xun’gu* (critical interpretation of the ancient text) and *kaoding* (textual research) used by Confucian scholars of the Han Dynasty. It differed sharply from the Neo-Confucianist movement of the Song Dynasty, which focused on discussing the mind and the relationship between *li* (natural law or objective spirit) and *qi* (life force or material world). Therefore, the Qian-Jia School was also referred to as *Hanxue* (Han School). The *Hanxue* scholars embraced simplicity in the writing style and paid attention to textual research. Founded by Gu Yanwu, a renowned scholar, the school focused its study on Confucian classics. It later branched into two sub-schools. One was the “Wu Sub-school,” led by Hui Dong. It made a great effort to collect Han Confucian classics for explanation and verification. They extolled Han-dynasty classics and followed the Han Dynasty’s method of studying Confucian classics. Apart from Hui Dong, other representative scholars of this school included Shen Tong and Jiang

Sheng. Dai Zhen headed the other branch, the “Anhui Sub-school.” It paid attention to studying the “Three Ritual Compendia,” namely *Zhouli* (*Book of Rites of the Western Zhou Dynasty*), *Yili* (*Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial*), and *Liji* (*Book of Rites*), and doing textual research on things, their names, and their systems. They used phonological and philological studies to determine and understand ancient classics’ contents and connotations. Dai Zhen’s representative work is *Mengzi Ziyi Shuzheng* (*Complete Interpretation of the Commentary on Meanings and Terms in the book of Mencius*). Leading scholars of the Qian-Jia School also included Duan Yucai and Wang Niansun.

The Qian-Jia School reflects the precious spirit of science. This school’s scholars diligently collected the classics and focused on textually researching, rationally analyzing, and intelligently synthesizing them. Their research attitude and philosophy that dismiss subjective guessing but respect meticulousness, concentration, and perseverance contributed to sorting and collecting ancient classics.

8.5 *Yongle Dadian* and *Siku Quanshu*

The longevity of Chinese civilization is inseparable from the tradition of unremittingly compiling classics. While the national power was strong, the Ming and Qing dynasties invested many human and material resources in systematically sorting out traditional Chinese classics, laying an essential foundation for inheriting Chinese civilization. Typically representing these efforts were the compilation of the *Yongle Dadian* (*The Yongle Encyclopedia*) in the Ming Dynasty and the anthologizing of the *Siku Quanshu* (*Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature*) in the Qing Dynasty.

The *Yongle Dadian* was the peak of the compilation of *leishu* (a genre of reference books called “category books”) in the Ming Dynasty. In the 2nd year of the Yongle era (1404), the imperial court organized scholars to sort classics and compile them into *Wenxian Dacheng* (*A Complete Work of Literature*). However, dissatisfied with it, Zhu Di, Emperor Chengzu, decided to have it re-anthologized. More than 3000 people were involved in this three-year project, and finally, they finished it and renamed it *Yongle Dadian* (*The Yongle Encyclopedia*). It contains 60 manuscript rolls (chapters) of the index and 22,877 manuscript rolls of the main text in a total of 11,095 volumes of more than 370 million Chinese characters, with over 7000–8000 books referenced, thus making an outstanding contribution to preserving ancient Chinese classics. Many of the books were found in the Qing Dynasty’s *Siku Quanshu* (*Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature*) (Fig. 8.3).

The Qing Dynasty emphasized culture and education and promoted official publishing. Emperor Kangxi presided over the publication of *Gujin Tushu Jicheng* (*Complete Collection of Illustrations and Writings from the Earliest to Current Times*). Emperor Qianlong went even further by completing the most extensive anthology of books in Chinese history, the *Siku Quanshu* (*Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature*). Important classics of the past Chinese dynasties were sorted



Fig. 8.3 *The Yongle Encyclopedia*

out and classified into four categories: *Jing* (Chinese Classic texts), *Shi* (Histories), *Zi* (Masters of philosophies, arts, and sciences), and *Ji* (Collections of Chinese literature). It includes 3461 titles of books in about 80,000 *juan* (sections). To facilitate the encyclopedia's compilation, the imperial court set up the Siku Quanshu Bureau, headed by Emperor Qianlong, with influential courtiers Yu Minzhong and He Shen as executives. The project lasted seven years, and seven copies were collected in different places in China after completion. The imperial court invested many human and financial resources in the project. Among the many editors in the front matter, 360 were court ministers. More scribes were enlisted in the project, amounting to 3826. The numbers alone show how magnificent the work and content of the encyclopedia were.

Siku Quanshu's compilation was a grand cultural project of historical significance. It not only systematically sorted the classics of the previous dynasties but also summarized the traditional Chinese culture and literature, effectively promoting the Qing Dynasty's academic endeavors. Unfortunately, the project had the drawback of banning and destroying many books in the process of collecting them.

8.6 Four Great Classical Chinese Novels

Long-term prosperity and stability in the Ming and Qing dynasties increased the size of the citizen class and, therefore, greatly enhanced art and literature. The poetry and *ci*-poetry in this period might have grown but failed to show any innovation. Nonetheless, tremendous progress was made in novels and dramas. The most representative fiction, known collectively as the “Four Great Classical Chinese Novels,” included *Shuihu Zhuan* (*Water Margin*), *Sanguo Yanyi* (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*), *Xiyou Ji* (*Journey to the West*), and *Honglou Meng* (*Dream of the Red Mansion*). They are classics in the history of Chinese literature and precious heritage in world literature.

Water Margin was organized by Shi Nai'an in the Ming Dynasty and edited by Luo Guanzhong. It mainly tells the uprising staged by the peasants under the leadership of Song Jiang, who gathered at the Liangshan Marsh in the late Northern Song Dynasty. Centering on the Song-led armed peasant uprising, the authors created a series of “Liangshan Heroes,” who were fearless, rebellious, resourceful, and responsible. Through the vivid depiction of their heroism, the novel exposes the decadence and cruelty of the ruling class of the Northern Song Dynasty. It also extols the disadvantaged people's courage to fight against their oppressors, their will to maintain justice, and their positive attitude of life. The fiction created the images of many heroes. They included Wu Song, who dared to challenge a man-eating tiger barehanded; Li Kui, who did not feel ashamed to apologize for his wrongdoing; and Lu Zhishen, who eliminated a despot for a just cause without hesitation. These highly artistically depicted heroes won the love and sympathy of the people who read them. *Water Margin* has many versions, all popular among the Chinese.

Romance of the Three Kingdoms is a classic historical novel created by Luo Guanzhong in the Ming Dynasty based on collective wisdom such as the classics of *Sanguo Zhi* (*Records of the Three Kingdoms*) and *Sanguo Zhi Pinghua* (*A Storytelling of the Records of the Three Kingdoms*). The novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* falls into five parts: “The Yellow Turban Rebellion,” “Treacherous Dong Zhuo,” “Feudal Lords Vying for Uniting China,” “the Tripartite Confrontation of the Three Kingdoms,” and “The Jin Dynasty Annexing the Three Kingdoms.” It describes the century-old volatile situation from the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty to the early years of the Western Jin Dynasty. And it presents a scene of various warlords contending with one another in political wranglings at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, with wars as the thread and heroes and warlords as the protagonists. Simultaneously, the novel creates a group of all-powerful historical figures. They were, for example, resourceful Zhuge Liang, faithful Guan Yu, righteous Zhang Fei, and brave Zhao Yun. The fiction is of high literary value thanks to its fluent language, variable styles of writing, magnificent organization of the plots, and vivid and detailed illustration of the characters. It naturally combines the spirit of seeking historical truth and the awareness of focusing on people's livelihood and paying attention to state affairs. It pioneered full-length historical fiction in the literary history of China and had a far-reaching influence on later literary creations.

Wu Cheng'en wrote *Journey to the West* based on the true story of Xuanzang, a Buddhist monk of the Tang Dynasty who traveled to India to procure Buddhist sutras. He also drew on the experience of creating related fiction during the previous dynasties. Through artistic recreation, he brought to life the witty and courageous Sun Wukong (Monkey King), the comfort-loving Pigsy, the diligent and obedient Sandy, and the determined and pious Tang Sanzang. The fantasy novel describes the master Tang Sanzang and his disciples' westward journey, during which they underwent and survived eight-one calamities by defeating various demons and monsters. Eventually, they came to the Buddha at the Buddhist Paradise and got genuine Buddhist scriptures. By describing the process of overcoming all kinds of obstacles by heroes represented by Monkey King, *Journey to the West* intends to demonstrate the spirit of rising to challenges and fighting with courage as well as the unswerving heroism and optimism of the Chinese nation. *Journey to the West* is an all-time favorite of the Chinese since it seemingly combines fantasy, courage, and worldliness. It has become a model of integrating romanticism with realism in the history of ancient Chinese novels.

Dream of the Red Mansion is a chapter-styled novel of the Qing Dynasty, extremely rich in content, profound in thought, and global in influence. The prevailing version of the book contains 120 chapters, of which 80 were believed to be penned by Cao Xueqin. Born of a Manchu family, he was well-versed in the ethnic group's culture. The story was based on the social reality of the Qing Dynasty with the fusion of the Manchu and Han cultures and set against the background of four influential families of Jia, Shi, Wang, and Xue. By delineating the love and fatal wedlock among Lin Daiyu, Jia Baoyu, and Xue Baochai, it demonstrates the decline of the feudal families and a group of women's tragic lives, vividly reflecting the different life paths of people in the traditional society and the trend of historical development. The author was good at analytically exposing the rise and fall of typical feudal families by describing seemingly banal daily routines and conflicts, giving the book a stunning artistic charm with numerous classic creative images. For example, Jia Baoyu was infatuated and independent, Lin Daiyu was sentimental and sensitive, Xue Baochai was composed and apathetic, and Wang Xifeng was astute and vigorous. The novel's style of writing is unique in that it is written in a tortuous and obscure manner, with deep yet sorrowful feelings and lofty and profound thinking. Replete with traditional and ethnic colors, the book jumped out of the previous box, achieving high artistic attainment with innovation. Its contents are so rich that it exhibits various aspects of the late Qing society: customs, food and drink, clothing, architecture, and gardening. For that reason, *Dreams of the Red Mansion* is also reputed as the "Encyclopedia of Feudal Society" of China.

8.7 Summary of Traditional Technology

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, most scholars were keen on imperial examinations and busy creating poems and essays. However, a few still loved nature, adhered to their hobbies, and devoted themselves to scientific research. Most of them worked single-handedly to synopsise past knowledge like traditional medicine and agriculture and produced many scientific and technological tomes. Undoubtedly, they became essential representatives of the synthesizers and innovators in this era's scientific and technical fronts. Among them, outstanding were Li Shizhen, author of *Bencao Gangmu* (*Compendium of Materia Medica*); Xu Guangqi, author of *Nongzheng Quanshu* (*Complete Treatise on Agricultural Administration*); and Song Yingxing, author of *Tiangong Kaiwu* (*The Exploitation of the Works of Nature*). Chinese scholars followed their pursuits in their unique way on the path of the Chinese civilization of science and technology.

Bencao Gangmu (*Compendium of Materia Medica*) is an epoch-making pharmacological work written by the Ming-dynasty scientist Li Shizhen. The book *Bencao Gangmu* (literally “Detailed Outline of Herbs”) was so named because traditional Chinese medicine was herb-based, and it was customary to outline them in detail. The monumental tome of 1.9 million Chinese characters is content-rich, divided into 52 *juan* (sections), and classified into 16 divisions and 62 orders. The main text comprises 1892 distinct herbs, 11,096 prescriptions, and 1160 illustrations. The compendium was indeed the product of arduous work. Li Shizhen (1518–1593) was born in a physician's family. After passing the imperial examination for *xiucai* (cultivated talent), he failed the next level, the township exam, three times and decided to study medicine. He devoted 20 years of his life to referencing and summarizing many previous medical achievements and doing fieldwork research. He collected herb specimens and recipes in the Wudang Mountains in Hubei, Mount Lu in Jiangxi, and the Maoshan Mountain in Jiangsu. He actively carried out some pharmacological experiments and dissected some animals, demonstrating a rigorous scientific attitude and spirit of exploration. Considering the confusion in ancient medicine compilation, Li Shizhen innovated a systematic method of classifying medicinal herbs, detailing the name, origin, form, collection method, medicinal properties, and decocting method of each herb, making his book highly scientific and practical. After its publication, the *Compendium of Materia Medica* was highly valued in medical circles and spread worldwide, first to Japan and then to Korea and Vietnam. It was introduced to Europe in the first half of the eighteenth century. Charles Darwin cited some results from the book in his *The Descent of Man*. The book has made outstanding contributions to the development of medicine and biology in the world and has become an important representative of traditional Chinese scientific and technological writings.

Written by Xu Guangqi, a scientist in the Ming Dynasty, *Complete Treatise on Agricultural Administration* is an academic work culminating in ancient agricultural science. With 60 volumes written in more than 500,000 characters, the book includes and synthesizes much of previous Chinese agrarian literature. It divides various agricultural production experiences into 12 categories: *Nongben* (Agriculture), *Tianzhi*

(Field System), *Nongshi* (Farming), *Shuili* (Water Conservancy), *Nongqi* (Farming Tools), *Shuyi* (Tree Cultivation), *Cansang* (Sericulture), *Cansang Guanglei* (Sericulture Extended), *Zhongzhi* (Cultivation of Plants), *Muyang* (Husbandry), *Zhizao* (Agricultural Products), and *Huangzheng* (Famine Relief). Xu Guangqi was engaged in farming in his early years. Later, he passed the township and triennial provincial imperial examinations. With a broad field of vision, he authored books in astronomy and arithmetic and devoted the most to agricultural research. He did not accept ancient conclusions blindly. Take napa cabbage, for example. Some classic books said that it could not be transplanted in North China and would have changed to another species, namely, turnip, after transplantation. He experimented with it by cultivating a plot beside his house, planted turnips in it, and carefully observed its growth. He proved the ancient record to be false. He opened up a wasteland, grew food, and experimented with water control in Tianjin. After getting positive results, he suggested developing rice planting in North China. In Shanghai, he tried introducing and growing high-yielding sweet potatoes, a staple food to fight famine. Xu Guangqi recorded the life habits of *Ericerus pela* and grasshoppers to stop plagues of locusts. It demonstrated his commendable spirit of scientific exploration and compassion for the country and its people. *Complete Treatise on Agricultural Administration* is a precious heritage in ancient Chinese agricultural literature and reflects ancient Chinese scholars' enthusiasm and exploratory spirit exhibited in agricultural research.

The Exploitation of the Works of Nature is the world's first comprehensive scientific and technological work on agriculture and handicraft production. Song Yingxing, a Chinese scientist of the Ming Dynasty, compiled and edited it by collecting and sorting out existent literature. The book is divided into 18 volumes, covering more than 130 production technologies. They include agriculture, sericulture, textile, dyeing, milling processes, salt technology, sugar technology, fermented beverages, porcelain technology, iron metallurgy, ships and cart technology, lime technology, oil pressing, papermaking, mining, military technology, and pigment technology. They covered almost all the important agricultural and handicraft sectors of the time. The book details the production techniques of various agricultural and handicraft industries, such as cultivating improved strains of rice seeds and hybrid domestic silk moths in agriculture. The methods also include joint operation in smelting iron, *guangang* (pouring pig iron liquid onto wrought iron), smelting zinc, and minting coins in metallurgy; weaving imperial robes with jacquards in textile; and discharging gas in mining. Song Yingxing was learned and versatile. He participated in the imperial examination and passed as a *juren* graduate when he was young though he intensely disliked the eight-legged essay. He devoted himself to research and in-depth investigation of various production technologies, going to the grassroots to learn know-how from farmers and handicraftsmen. After years of painstaking efforts, he completed this epoch-making tome of science and technology. In compiling *The Exploitation of the Works of Nature*, Song Yingxing attached importance to experimental data and collected bountiful statistics, such as cereal crop yield per unit area, oil yield rate, transplanting ratio in padded fields, and the mix ratios of various alloys. This tome demonstrates the fine qualities of outstanding scientists of ancient China: the

exploratory spirit they displayed as they conducted in-depth investigations while learning from the laboring people. After publication, *The Exploitation of the Works of Nature* soon spread to Japan and the West. It has been valued worldwide and has become an important heritage of scientific and technological civilization in the history of China.

The Ming-Qing civilization reached the peak of traditional Chinese society and accomplished achievements that received worldwide attention, leading to highly-developed material, institutional, cultural, scientific, and technical civilizations. However, after the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese civilization encountered a robust challenge from Western civilization. China gradually fell into the abyss of a catastrophic semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. China was attacked by Western powers' impregnable warships and cannons; challenged by Western technical advancements in acoustics, optics, and electricity generation; and pressured by Western political civilization in the form of parliamentary and presidential government. In the face of these challenges, Chinese civilization encountered a major dilemma not seen in thousands of years. China found itself in a desperate situation with which it could hardly cope. The Chinese nation was in an unprecedented crisis. Drawing lessons from bitter experiences, Chinese intellectuals reflected on the traditional civilizations and showed great enthusiasm for Western cultures. Thus, national independence and prosperity became the theme of the times.

Chapter 9

Modern Chinese Civilization



Linghe Ma

“Nothing in this world can withstand the longing for spring, / These longings join together until they reach the shadowy netherworld in tears. / The wailing 400 million people are asking the same question: / Oh where, oh where on this earth can we find our divine China?” This is a poem titled *Yougan (My Feelings)*, written in the early twentieth century, expressing the feelings of the Chinese people who had suffered humiliation since the 1840 Opium War. In the more than 100 years that were the modern times, the imperialist countries had never stopped invading China, and most of the wars ended in our defeat and the signing of unequal treaties. Under the yoke of unequal treaties, large pieces of territory were ceded, many harbors and bays were on foreign leases, and many ports of trade were reduced to concessions that were “states within China;” foreign powers acquired consular jurisdiction, the right to make tariff agreements, the right to manage customs, the right to navigate inland rivers, and other political and economic privileges, making it difficult for China to be politically independent and subjecting the country under the oppression of foreign capitalism economically.

Although China had suffered humiliation in the modern times, the times were, after all, moving forward, and with the combined effect of external and internal forces, China started the historical process of modernization. Modernization means the historical process of transforming human society from a traditional agrarian society to a modern industrial one. China’s modernization was forced to commence under the aggression of Western imperialists. It was closely integrated with national independence and national liberation, and took place in the midst of the clash and conflict between Chinese and Western civilizations. The fight against imperialism and feudalism and the modernization of economy, politics, and culture were two aspects of the transformation of civilization in the modern era, and neglecting either aspect would compromise the full understanding of modern Chinese society. The

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X. Bu (ed.), *The History of Chinese Civilization*, China Insights,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7125-1_9

humiliation suffered by modern Chinese civilization does not mean that Chinese civilization sank. The Chinese people, in their suffering, were still striving for the rejuvenation of Chinese civilization. After the attempt of republicanism, they finally embarked on the path of socialism.

9.1 Aggression of the Powers and the Civilization in Darkness

For a long period of time, the Chinese people, with their outstanding wisdom and ingenuity, created a splendid ancient civilization and led the world for a long time, making great contributions to the development of human civilization. But as history entered the nineteenth century, Western capitalism was developing at an astonishing pace and the whole world situation was undergoing drastic changes. In the face of the latest developments in the world, China began to lag behind. The Qing Dynasty was the last dynasty of feudal society in China. After the “High Qing era,” it had begun to decline and was in crisis. Falling behind the UK and other Western capitalist countries, the Qing Dynasty in the nineteenth century became their prey. After the two Opium Wars, Chinese society underwent fundamental changes due to the signing of a number of unequal treaties.

In February 1860, the British and French governments again appointed James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin as High Commissioner and Plenipotentiary in China and the Far East and Baron Gros as minister-in-command to lead the newly formed allied force to invade China. This allied force had more than 200 warships and transports, a British troop of more than 18,000 and a French troop of more than 7000. The British and French allied force captured Zhoushan in Zhejiang in April, and Dalian and Yantai in May and June. In August, they landed at Beitang, Tianjin and attacked the rear of the Dagukou Fort. As the Qing army had left the rear unguarded, under the two-sided attack, the Dagukou Fort was taken. The British and French successively captured Tianjin and Tongzhou and threatened Beijing. On September 22, Emperor Xianfeng fled to Rehe, leaving his brother Yixin, Prince Gong, to plead for peace with the aggressors. The British and French allied force quickly seized the Yuanmingyuan, or Old Summer Palace, in Beijing. The palace, which started to be built in the 48th year of Kangxi’s reign (1709), integrated the achievements of Chinese and Western architecture and housed treasures of ancient and modern art. Consisting of three gardens, i.e. the Yuanmingyuan (“Garden of Perfect Brightness”), Wanchunyuan (“Garden of Elegant Spring”), and Changchunyuan (“Garden of Eternal Spring”), with a total area of more than 5000 μm , it was reputed as the “Garden of Gardens.” The British and French allied force broke into the Yuanmingyuan on October 6 and then carried out a massive looting, smashing and destroying all the valuable treasures that could not be moved. After that, they set fire and turned it into a rubble. The damage caused to the Chinese people by the burning and looting of the Yuanmingyuan

was incalculable. The burning of the Yuanmingyuan became a historical testimony to the atrocious crimes of the capitalist aggressors.

Due to the invasion of foreign colonialists, China's territorial, judicial and customs sovereignty was undermined, and China had been reduced from an independent feudal sovereign state to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. The cession of territory, the opening of ports of trade, and the establishment of concessions not only infringed on China's territorial and administrative sovereignty, but also made it possible for goods of foreign capitalist countries to penetrate more directly into the Chinese market. After the UK seized Hong Kong, it declared it a free port and appointed a governor to organize a colonial government in the territory and impose colonial rule. Similarly, Portugal took advantage of the Qing government's compromise and surrender to the invaders and issued a proclamation in March 1849 to close the office of the Guangdong Customs, forcibly occupying Macao and forcing the Customs to move to Huangpu. Hong Kong and Macao became bridgeheads for capitalist powers to invade China. Among the over 10 open ports of trade, Shanghai also gradually became an important base for the aggressors. The UK, France and the United States set up concessions in Shanghai and other places. In these concessions, foreigners set up administrative, taxation, police and judicial agencies and established colonial rule, making them "states within China." Concessions were not only a political symbol of China's semi-colonial status, but also bridgeheads for the aggression of foreign economic powers into China.

From the Opium War to the end of the nineteenth century, the Catholic, Jesuit and Tsarist Orthodox churches in Europe and Americas sent more than 3300 missionaries to China, assimilating nearly 800,000 members. In 1900, in Shandong Province alone, there were more than 1300 churches with more than 150 clerics and more than 80,000 parishioners. Out of 108 prefectures and counties in the province, 72 had a church presence. Under the name of missionary work, these foreign missionaries took advantage of unequal treaties and engaged in various aggressive activities. They blatantly collected information on all aspects of Chinese politics, military and culture across the country, and engaged in espionage and secret service. Moreover, they grossly interfered in China's internal affairs and violated China's sovereignty, and even held the government hostage, took over lawsuits, and recruited landlords, hooligans, and scoundrels as church lackeys. They did wrong and preyed on the people. In addition, economically, they seized properties and fields, collected rents and debts, and exploited the peasants. Meanwhile, in the course of their missionary work, the Western missionaries rejected traditional Chinese culture in its entirety and showed a sense of cultural superiority by demanding that the Chinese should dishonor Confucius and Mencius, disrespect their ancestors, disbelieve in Chinese gods and immortals and Buddhism, and believe only in Christianity. They behaved in a way that was alien to Chinese tradition in terms of ethics and lifestyle. The invasion of Western culture, represented by Western religions, posed a great threat to traditional Chinese culture with Confucianism and feudal ethical codes at its core. In terms of cultural psychology, the invasion inevitably provoked the Chinese people, especially the bureaucrats and gentry, to reject foreign religions. Consciously or unconsciously, these people incorporated the thought of "defending the Sacred

Way” into the political struggle against the aggression. The resistance of bureaucrats and gentry broadened the base of the struggle against foreign religions and increased the complexity of the struggle. All this led to increasingly acute conflicts between the people and the churches, and various clashes between them kept occurring. However, the Qing government adopted a policy of “pacifying the churches and suppressing the people” in response to the conflicts. It repeatedly issued orders to protect the missionaries and converts. This made the missionaries and lawless converts more reckless and further intensified the conflicts. As a result, the general public abhorred foreign religions and constantly fought against the churches, and “wherever there are churches, the people have many grievances”.

The Chinese people’s struggle against the churches first emerged in the 1860s and kept springing up throughout the country thereafter. After the defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War, the nation was in unprecedented crisis, which further fueled the people’s willingness to fight against the invasion of foreign churches. The people, in a voluntary and progressive manner, combined their opposition and the fight against the division of China by the powers. The Boxer Rebellion brought the struggle against foreign churches to a new stage. It seriously threatened the illegitimate interests of the imperialists in China. The diplomatic missions of all the foreign powers pressed the Qing government to step up its suppression, while constantly appealing to their own governments. Around June 6, 1900, the proposal of a joint action against China agreed on by the ministers in China was approved by their governments in succession, and on June 10, British Admiral of the Fleet Edward Seymour led an invading allied force of more than 2000 troops from Britain, the United States, Germany, France, Russia, Japan, Italy and Austria to invade Beijing by train from Tianjin. A large-scale war of aggression began. Despite the tenacious resistance of some Qing troops and the Boxers, Beijing was captured on June 14th. Empress Dowager Cixi and Emperor Guangxu were forced to flee in haste. On her way to Xi’an, the Empress Dowager made Li Hongzhang minister plenipotentiary to negotiate peace with the powers and ordered the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion all over the country. On September 7, 1901 (the 25th day of the 7th lunar month in the year of Xinchou), the representatives of 11 countries, including Russia and Britain, signed the humiliating *Xinchou Treaty*, or *Boxer Protocol*, in Beijing with Yikuang and Li Hongzhang, the plenipotentiary representatives of the Qing government. The Qing government was to make reparations of 450 million taels of silver to the powers, to be paid in 39 years at an annual interest rate of 4%, bringing the total principal and interest to 980 million taels, which, when added with the over 20 million taels of local reparations from provinces, amounted to more than 1 billion taels. The reparations were guaranteed by tariffs, salt taxes, and standing tariffs. This was the largest reparation since the Opium War. From then on, almost all the important taxes of the Qing government were controlled by the imperialists. In order to pay the huge amount of reparations, the Qing government intensified its extortion and racketeering of the people, causing them to live in severe misery and increasing social and economic depression. The embassy district was established in Dongjiaominxiang Alley in Beijing, where Chinese were not allowed to live and where the imperialists could station their troops. From then on, the embassy area became “another state

within China,” the headquarters for the imperialists to plan their invasion of China, and the ministers became bosses of the Qing government. The Dagukou Fort and all the other forts along the route from Beijing to Dagu were demolished, the 12 strategic points along the Beijing-Shanhaiguan railroad were garrisoned by troops from the foreign powers, and Chinese troops were not allowed to be stationed within 20 *li* of Tianjin. The *Boxer Protocol* was a heavy yoke imposed by imperialism on the Chinese people by force, and represented an unprecedented betrayal of national rights by the Qing government. Its signing marked the complete transformation of China into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society and the complete transformation of the Qing government into a “puppet court of foreigners”.

The Boxer Rebellion was a vigorous peasant-dominated anti-imperialist patriotic movement. Although it was jointly quelled by the Qing government and foreign reactionaries, it has far-reaching historical significance in modern Chinese history. It dealt a heavy blow to imperialism, shattered the imperialists’ delusion of dividing China, and showed that the Chinese people were invincible. Westerners had to admit that “there is no nation in the world that is more in sync, more united, more closely bound by ancient bonds and charm than the Chinese.” “Neither Europe, America, nor Japan, or any other country has the brain power or military strength to rule this people, which constitute a quarter of the world’s population,” “so the matter of carving China up is really a bad idea”. After the Boxer Rebellion, more Chinese people became supportive of the democratic revolution by the bourgeoisie. Sun Yat-sen had said, “After the defeat in the year of Gengzi (1900), it has been rare to hear the general public curse [us revolutionaries], and people with insight have mostly lamented for us, regretting our failed efforts. The change of attitude is drastic.” Moreover, the Boxer Rebellion also prompted the bourgeois revolutionaries to realize that the people were the backbone of the revolution. “The lower classes are the backbone of the revolutionary cause; the middle classes are at its forefront.” All these strongly contributed to the culmination of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

9.2 National Salvation and Hundred Days’ Reform

The Opium War not only brought about dramatic socio-economic changes in China, but also had an unprecedented and profound impact on Chinese academia. The defeat in the Opium War was an extremely painful lesson for the patriotic scholars. The advanced minds began to discard the illusion of the “Heavenly Kingdom” and opened their eyes to the world. In the community of scholar-officials, those insightful inherited and developed the tradition from the Ming and Qing dynasties of pragmatism—they opposed detachment from reality and empty and shallow talk, set store by studying the practical problems, advocating learning from the West and advocated reform in order to achieve the goal of strengthening the country against aggression. Their thoughts represented the new ideological trend of Chinese society after the Opium War and became the precursor of the later reformist thoughts.

From around the 1870s to the early 1890s, with the rise of national capitalism and the early bourgeoisie, there emerged the reformist ideas that reflected the interests of the national bourgeoisie. Early major representatives of the reformist school included Wang Tao, Xue Fucheng, Ma Jianzhong, Zheng Guanying, Chen Qiu, Chen Chi, and others. Their ideas, views, and propositions were not identical, but they shared a common political orientation, which called for learning extensively from the West, reforming the economy, culture, military, and politics, and promoting the smooth development of capitalism.

The early reformists had a patriotic ideology of opposing foreign invasion. They condemned the foreign aggressors for forcing the Qing government to sign unequal treaties and believed that the treaties had brought endless misfortune to China. Xue Fucheng advocated the abolition of the one-sided most-favored-nation status, and the reclamation of consular jurisdiction from foreign invaders, which was “pivotal to China’s security.” They advocated the development of national capitalist industry and commerce, and opposed the traditional policy of agricultural and commercial suppression. Xue further pointed out that in order to develop national commerce, it was necessary to develop national industry, saying that “nothing but commerce can broaden the sources of commerce, thus industry is the foundation, and commerce is of use to it.” He also advocated mining and railroad building, development of the private sector, and abolition of the *lijin* tax that hindered the growth of national industry and commerce. Zheng Guanying, on the other hand, put forward the concept of “commerce and war,” and proceeded to develop the thought that “commerce and war are fundamental” in a more complete sense. Politically, they advocated political innovation and opposed feudal despotism. They came to realize that the root cause of China’s poverty and weakness laid in the rule of feudal absolutism, and that it was necessary to change this situation and carry out political reforms. They began to aspire to build a Western constitutional bourgeois monarchy. Some even explicitly advocated the establishment of a parliamentary system in China.

The early reformist thoughts reflected the interests and demands of the emerging national bourgeoisie, had a large impact on society, and to some extent, played a pioneering role in ideology for the later Hundred Days’ Reform. However, they also had obvious limitations and manifested the weakness and proneness to compromise of their class. The early reformists were opposed to foreign capitalism, but their perception of foreign invaders was vague. They imagined that through diplomacy and negotiation, they could abolish all kinds of privileges enjoyed by foreign powers in China. They opposed the rule of feudal autocracy and demanded the development of capitalism, but they did not dare to tackle the feudal land system. Their thoughts and proposals were fragmented and not yet formed a system. In general, they had not yet been able to break through the bounds of “adopting Western knowledge for its practical uses while keeping Chinese values as the core” (*zhongti-xiyong*).

After the 1890s, with the unprecedented national crisis and the initial development of national capitalism, a reformist trend emerged in the community of intellectuals and evolved into a political movement which had theories and guiding principles, with a certain degree of mass participation—it was also an ideological emancipation

movement launched by the bourgeois reformists. Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong, Yan Fu and others were the main leaders of this reformist movement.

Kang Youwei (1858–1927), born Kang Zuyi, courtesy name Guangsha, and literary name Changsu, was a native of Nanhai County, Guangdong Province. When he was young, he received a strict orthodox education in Confucianism. He was fascinated by New Text Classics and advocated a pragmatic style of study. In 1879, he traveled to Hong Kong where he came into direct contact with Western material civilization and read books on Western studies extensively. In 1888, he wrote a 5000-character-long petition to Emperor Guangxu, requesting him to “reform the established law, learn what the subjects think, and be prudent about appointments around [Your Majesty]” so as to save the country from destruction. Although he did not propose a specific reform plan, he stressed that if China succeeded in its reform, “prosperity and strength can be achieved” within 10 years, and that “humiliating defeats can be avenged” within 30 years. The petition failed to reach the emperor, but it was spread among some patriots who had reformist thoughts and had a certain social impact, which won Kang Youwei some reputation.

In 1890, Kang Youwei founded the Wanmu Caotang Academy (or Mariad Trees Academy) in Changxingli, Guangzhou, where he recruited students and gave lectures to train the backbone of the reform, while writing books and expounding his reformist ideas. During this period, Kang successively authored *Xinxue Weijing Kao* (*A Study of the Forged Classics of the Xin Period*) and *Kongzi Gaizhi Kao* (*A Study of Confucius as a Reformer of Institutions*), which became important theoretical foundations for his advocacy of the reform. The publications of the two books enabled Kang Youwei’s thought of reform to be widely disseminated, and further laid the theoretical foundation for the reformists to carry out the reform. They criticized the conservative traditions, rejected the cultural mentality of hesitation and inaction, and put forward new political thoughts on learning from Western capitalist democracy.

The reformist thought eventually developed into a political movement, starting with the Gongche Shangshu movement, or the “Scholars’ Petition to the Throne,” led by Kang Youwei. In early 1895, Kang went to Beijing to take the imperial examination for the second time. It was the time when the *Treaty of Shimonoseki* was concluded. In order to oppose the cession of land for peace, Kang gathered more than 1300 examination candidates in Beijing in April and submitted a joint petition to Emperor Guangxu. In the petition, he requested the emperor to issue an imperial edict to refuse to sign the peace treaty, and put forward four propositions, namely, “Issue imperial edicts to inspire the Chinese people,” “Move the capital to secure the country’s foundation,” “Train the military to reinforce China’s strength,” and “Reform to achieve good governance.” The reform included, first, the way to enrich the country, i.e. issuing banknotes and promoting private investment in industrial, mining, and transportation enterprises; second, the way to support the people, i.e. developing and improving agriculture, and third, the way to edify the people, i.e. adopting the Western ways and reforming the imperial examination system. Although the Gongche Shangshu movement ultimately failed to prevent the signing of the *Treaty of Shimonoseki*, it marked the beginning of the reformist political movement and put forward for the first time a reformist political program. The Gongche



Fig. 9.1 Kang Youwei and the *Gongche Shangshu* movement (Petition of the examination candidates)

Shangshu movement had a great social impact. As the content of the petition was widely circulated, the call for reform grew. The intellectuals represented by Kang Youwei broke the ban on the “interference of scholars in government” and openly gathered to write petitions and discuss politics, protesting against the Qing government’s signing of the treaty of humiliation and disgrace, thereby playing a pioneering role in modern Chinese history. As a result, Kang Youwei gained the status of the leader of the reformist Movement (Fig. 9.1).

After the *Gongche Shangshu* movement, the examination results were announced. Kang Youwei won the fifth place among the *gongshi* (scholars who passed the conference exam). He then received a *jinshi* (presented scholar) degree in the court exam and was appointed as a director of the Ministry of Works. In May and June of the same year, he submitted two more petitions in succession, which not only further emphasized the necessity of reform, but also clearly proposed to set up a parliament. Kang’s third petition finally reached Emperor Guangxu and won his approval.

On June 11, 1898, Emperor Guangxu issued an imperial edict to “clearly elucidate national policies,” announcing the launch of reform according to Kang Youwei’s proposals. The reform lasted 103 days until its failure on September 21, and was historically known as the Hundred Days Reform. Because 1898 was the year of Wuxu according to the Chinese lunar calendar, it was also known as Wuxu Reform. During the reform, Emperor Guangxu issued more than 100 edicts. Their main contents can be summarized as follows: Firstly, in economy, establish the Bureau of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce to protect agriculture, industry and commerce and to reward inventions; establish the General Administration of Roads and Mines to build railroads and develop mining; launch the postal service and close traditional Chinese *yizhan* (posthouses); reform the fiscal system; and allow “banners” to earn their own living. Secondly, in politics, lay off redundant staff, and cut down overlapping administrative agencies; allow the creation of newspapers and the petition to the government; reform laws and regulations, and clean up corruption. Thirdly, in military, disband the Green Standard Army, implement the neighborhood administration system, train the navy and land forces, and ask the armies of all provinces to adopt the Western drill program and firearms. And fourthly, in culture and education,

reform the imperial examination system, abolish the eight-legged essay and replace it with a test of discourse on politics; set up a wide range of schools, found the Imperial University of Peking; set up a translation bureau to translate new foreign books, and send students to study abroad. These measures greatly contributed to the spread of Western culture and science and to the development of Chinese national capitalism, and gave the enlightened gentry and national bourgeoisie the opportunity to participate in political affairs. However, it also had great limitations. Economically, although it demanded to open the way for the development of capitalism, it did not dare to touch the feudal land ownership system; politically, although it made certain reforms to the feudal bureaucracy, it avoided mentioning the parliament and the constitution, which were the basis of the constitutional monarchy. All these show that the Hundred Days' Reform did not touch the foundation of feudal rule, and its reform was incomplete and had great compromise. Even so, Emperor Guangxu's new policies were resisted and sabotaged by the intransigent faction. As a result, most of the edicts of the reform were dead letters.

The implementation of the new policies was resisted and sabotaged by the feudal intransigent forces and bureaucrats supporting Westernization. The struggle between the new and the old became more and more intense. The Empress Dowager secretly instructed the intransigent faction to counterattack and intensify preparations for a coup d'état. In this urgent situation, Kang Youwei and Tan Sitong had no choice but to contact Yuan Shikai and persuade him to perform his duty to the throne, execute Ronglu, and eliminate the conservative fraction. Yuan Shikai (1859–1916), courtesy name Weiting, was a native of Xiangcheng, Henan. After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, he trained the “New Army” in Xiaozhan, Tianjin. He employed foreign instructors and recruited henchmen to build a new 7000-strong well-equipped and well-trained army, which became the guarantee for the elevation for his political status. At the time when the reform was gaining momentum, he contributed to and joined the Qiangxue Society to show his liberal-mindedness. This gave the reformists illusions about him, and they hoped to use his military power to ensure the smooth implementation of the reform and the safety of Emperor Guangxu. To enlist Yuan Shikai, Emperor Guangxu summoned him twice and appointed him vice minister, making him responsible for military training. On September 18, 1898, Tan Sitong called on Yuan alone by night at Fahua Temple, with a confidential edict from the emperor, asking him to mobilize his troops and kill Ronglu to save the emperor and eradicate the conservative fraction. Yuan immediately promised to kill Ronglu, but he soon reneged on his promise and snitched. On September 21, the Empress Dowager launched a coup d'état, imprisoning Emperor Guangxu at Yingtai in Zhongnanhai, declaring herself “in regency,” and ordering the arrest of Kang Youwei and other reformists. Kang and Liang Qichao took refuge in Hong Kong and Japan respectively with the help of foreign embassies, while Tan Sitong who refused to flee was arrested on the 24th. On September 28, Tan Sitong, Yang Rui, Lin Xu, Liu Guangdi, Kang Guangren, and Yang Shenxiu were executed at Caishikou in Beijing. They were collectively known as the “Six Gentlemen of the Hundred Days' Reform.” When Tan was about to be executed, he exclaimed, “Though I have the intention to kill the thieves, I lack the strength to reverse the situation. But to die for my cause, I am

happy! I am happy!” He demonstrated remarkable heroism as shown in his poem line, “Facing the sword I’d give but a skyward-roaring laughs”.

The Hundred Days’ Reform was a reformist movement led by the national bourgeoisie out of patriotism and the pursuit for saving the country. It demonstrated that the bourgeoisie came onto the stage of history as an independent force. The reformists used Western bourgeois culture to criticize and struggle against the autocracy and feudal culture that had long prevailed in China. They criticized the Three Cardinal Guides and Five Constant Virtues armed with the concepts of civil rights and equality, and boldly rejected the “divine rights of the emperor” and the “sanctity of monarchs” armed with the theory of democracy. Because Kang Youwei and other reformists grasped new ideological doctrines and examined history and tradition from a new height, the depth and breadth of their criticism was unparalleled by their predecessors. While criticizing feudal autocracy, the reformists also systematically introduced the social and political doctrines and natural science of Western bourgeois, and promoted the concept of civil rights and the theory of evolution through societies, newspapers, and schools. The introduction of the theory of evolution, in particular, not only gave them an important theoretical foundation for reform, but also had a profound impact on society. Although the Hundred Days’ Reform failed, what they preached such as civil rights and the theory of evolution shook many Chinese out of their dreams of feudalism and brought fresh air and sunlight into the occluded Chinese society, thus opening the floodgates of the first intellectual emancipation in modern China.

9.3 Revolution of 1911 and Abdication of the Qing Emperor

The Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution was started by Sun Yat-sen. Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), first name Wen, courtesy name Yixian, got his most commonly known Chinese name Zhongshan from his Japanese name Kikori Nakayama (中山樵, or *Zhongshanqiao*) when he was engaged in the revolution later in Japan. In China, he is known as Sun Zhongshan.

Sun was born in Xiangshan County, Guangdong Province, into a family that transformed itself from a small-scale farmer-producer household to a bourgeois one. In 1879, he went with his mother to his brother Sun Mei in Honolulu. With his brother’s financial support, he enrolled in schools run by the British and American churches. In the process of receiving a Western-style education, he gradually developed the aspiration of emulating the West to transform China and save his compatriots. In 1883, after Sun returned to China, he attended the Government Central School (now Queen’s College) and the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese in succession. In 1892, he graduated with honors from the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese. During the above schooling experience, Sun mainly received education in bourgeois ideology, culture and scientific knowledge, which played a crucial role in the formation and development of his democratic revolutionary ideology.

By this time, Sun had developed revolutionary ideas against the Qing Dynasty on the one hand, and was influenced by the popular reformist ideas of the time on the other. In 1894, he wrote to Li Hongzhang, saying that “the foundation of Europe’s prosperity lies not in their powerful navies and excellent weaponry, but in the fact that people can give full play to their talents, land can give full play to its advantages, things can be used to the fullest, and goods can flow smoothly. This has paved their path to prosperity and is what they have relied upon in governance.” He asked the Qing government to follow the Western capitalist system and carry out reforms to develop modern industry and commerce. His petition did not draw the attention of Li Hongzhang, who did not receive him. Thus, he resolutely gave up the illusion of peaceful reform and pursued the path of revolution.

In November 1894, Sun Yat-sen traveled from Tianjin to Honolulu, where he joined more than 20 overseas Chinese to meet in He Kuan’s apartment and founded the *Hsing Chung Hui*, or Revive China Society, the first revolutionary group of the Chinese bourgeoisie. The aim of the society was to revive China and maintain the dignity of the state, and the revolutionary program and goal was to expel the Manchus, restore China, and establish a republic. The establishment of the society was the official beginning of Sun Yat-sen’s engagement in the democratic revolution, marking the initial formation of the bourgeois democratic revolutionary faction in China in terms of organization and the beginning of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

In the summer of 1905, Sun arrived in Japan from Europe and exchanged views with Huang Xing, Song Jiaoren, and other heads of revolutionary groups to discuss the establishment of a unified political party, which received their unanimous approval. After repeated discussions, it was agreed that the name of the new group would be Tongmenghui of China, or Chinese United League. On August 20, the founding convention of the Chinese United League was held in Tokyo, Japan. The convention adopted the constitution of the League drafted by Huang Xing and others, stipulating that the 16-character program proposed by Sun Yat-sen, namely, “Expel the Manchu, restore China, create a republic, and distribute land equally among the people” would be its purpose. The headquarters was set up in Tokyo, and Sun was elected as the chairman. In accordance with the principle of separation of powers, the headquarters had three departments: Executive, Deliberation and Judicial under the chairman. And there were five branches in China, namely the branches of East, South, West, North and Central China, under which provincial sub-branches were established; and four branches abroad, namely the branches of Europe, Nanyang, America and Honolulu, under which national sub-branches were established. The convention decided to make *The Min Bao* the organ of the League. After the establishment of the Tongmenghui, revolutionaries from home and abroad joined in droves, and in less than a year, the total number of members exceeded 10,000. Most of the members were petite and middle bourgeoisie and intellectuals. The Tongmenghui was the first bourgeois revolutionary party in China with a clear political program and a complete organizational structure. It assembled scattered local revolutionary groups in the form of a nationally unified party, which facilitated unity and cooperation within the bourgeois revolutionary faction and gave the bourgeois revolutionary faction a

leading core. The establishment of the Tongmenghui marked a new stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution in China.

In November 1905, *The Min Bao* was published in Tokyo, Japan. In its preface, Sun elaborated the 16-character program of the League into the Three Principles of the People, often summarized as nationalism (*Minzu*), democracy (*Minquan*), and the livelihood of the people (*Minsheng*). The Three Principles of the People was a theoretical political program for the bourgeois democratic revolution in China, which addressed the three major tasks of national liberation, democratic revolution, and social reform facing Chinese society in the late 19th and early twentieth centuries, and was designed to fulfill these three historical tasks.

The Principle of *Minzu*, or Nationalism, entailed two tasks, namely, “expelling the Manchus” and “restoring China,” that is, carrying out a nationalist revolution, overthrowing the Qing government headed by the Manchurian aristocracy, eliminating domestic national oppression, and realizing the liberation, independence and harmonious co-prosperity of the Chinese nation. The Principle of *Minquan*, generally translated as “democracy”, consisted mainly of “creating a republic,” that is, carrying out a political revolution to overthrow the feudal monarchical dictatorship and establish a bourgeois democratic republic, which was the core of Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People. The Principle of *Minsheng* entailed “distributing land equally among the people,” that is, carrying out a social revolution, the core of which was to resolve the issue of land. Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People was a relatively complete program of the bourgeois democratic revolution. It expressed the political and economic revolutionary demands of the national and petty bourgeoisie, and reflected the urgent desire of the Chinese people for national liberation and democratic rights. Therefore, it inspired a large number of bourgeois intellectuals to struggle heroically for the abolition of the imperial system and the establishment of a bourgeois republic.

The bourgeois revolutionaries took the armed overthrow of the Qing government and the establishment of a bourgeois republic as their goal of struggle. Since the founding of the Revive China Society, Sun Yat-sen attached great importance to armed struggle. After the founding of the Tongmenghui, besides engaging in polemics with the reformists, the revolutionaries also launched a series of armed uprisings, which pushed the masses’ struggle against the Qing Dynasty to a high level. The uprisings launched by the revolutionaries in this period all ended in failure. Most of them were adventurous, attempting to succeed by chance, and their failure was inevitable. However, with their lives and blood, the revolutionaries expanded the influence of the democratic revolution and inspired the fighting spirit of the people, making the overthrow of the Qing dynasty’s autocratic rule a popular demand, thus creating a revolutionary wave that swept the whole country and fundamentally shook the foundation of the Qing Dynasty’s reactionary rule, which was quickly overthrown after the Wuchang Uprising.

On October 10, 1911, the revolutionaries launched the Wuchang Uprising, the concentrated outbreak of domestic class conflicts and a culmination of the rising anger of the people against the Qing Dynasty, which was also inseparable from the long and fruitful work carried out by the revolutionaries in Hubei. On the night of

October 10, without a unified leadership, Xiong Bingkun, a revolutionary in the 8th Battalion of the New Army Engineering Battalion, fired the first shot of the uprising. After the outbreak, the soldiers of the New Army inside and outside the city coordinated with each other and fought bravely through the night, successively capturing the governor's office, the treasury, and other important organs, controlling the city of Wuchang, and achieving the victory of the first uprising. On the night of the 11th and the morning of the 12th, the New Army in Hankou and Hanyang rose in succession, and the three towns of Wuhan were completely controlled by the revolutionaries. When the news of the Wuchang Uprising went around, other places responded, forming a national revolutionary climax. Within two months, 14 of the 18 provinces in the mainland had declared independence. The storm of the revolution swept the country.

On December 25, Sun Yat-sen returned to Shanghai from abroad to break the deadlock over the choice of the president of the provisional government. On the 29th, representatives of 17 provinces held an election for the provisional president in Nanjing, with one vote per province. Sun was elected with 16 votes. It was also agreed that if Yuan Shikai supported the republic, Sun must give up the presidency to Yuan. At Sun's motion, the solar calendar was adopted, with 1912 as the first year of the Republic. On New Year's Day, 1912, Sun Yat-sen was sworn in as provisional president in Nanjing and proclaimed the founding of the Republic of China.

The Provisional Government of Nanjing, headed by Sun Yat-sen, promulgated a series of decrees and measures in favor of national capitalist economy, bourgeois democratic politics, and culture and education in the short three months of its existence. Politically, the *Provisional Constitution* of the bourgeois republic was promulgated, which stipulated that the sovereignty of the Republic of China belonged to all the people; that the people had the freedom of speech, publication, assembly, association, the right to vote, and the right to be elected; that a responsible cabinet system be adopted as the state system, with the cabinet prime minister elected by the majority party in the parliament; and that the orders issued by the president had to be countersigned by the cabinet prime minister to take effect. Other legal documents were also launched, ordering the governments at all levels to destroy the instruments of torture, prohibiting torture and corporal punishment, abolishing the feudal hierarchy, prohibiting foot-binding, braiding, opium smoking and trading, gambling, and so on. Economically, the Provisional Government introduced laws and regulations to protect industry and commerce, promoted the establishment of private industry and commerce, encouraged overseas Chinese to invest in the country, and abolished the harsh taxes and levies of the Qing Dynasty. In terms of culture and education, the educational guidelines of national education, practical education, civic morality, world view, and aesthetic education were put forward. Educational institutions at all levels were renamed schools, co-education was advocated, the subject of classic recital at elementary school was abolished, and the textbooks published by the Qing Dynasty were banned. These laws of the Provisional Government of Nanjing reflected the interests and principles of the national bourgeoisie in a comprehensive manner (Fig. 9.2).



Fig. 9.2 Sun Yat-sen and his oath at the swearing-in ceremony of the provisional president

When the news of the Wuchang Uprising reached Beijing on October 11, Yikuang, Prime Minister of the Imperial Cabinet (or Cabinet of Prince Qing), presided over a cabinet meeting and decided that Minister of War Yinchang would go to Hubei to suppress it. However, most of the officers of the Beiyang Army were Yuan Shikai's confidants. Though Yuan Shikai was removed from office at this time, his was still influential in the army. So Yinchang's command often went ignored. On October 14, Regent Zaifeng hosted a meeting to discuss countermeasures. Some important Manchu ministers, led by Yikuang, advocated the reappointment of Yuan Shikai to salvage the critical situation. Thus, Yuan was appointed as the Viceroy of Huguang (Hubei and Hunan provinces and the surrounding areas), who was also responsible for the "suppression of bandits."

Yuan Shikai had been living in the village of Huanshang, Zhangde after being removed from office in 1909. Outwardly, he was very leisurely, often wearing a bamboo hat and a straw raincoat, sitting in a boat and angling like a fishing man on the Huan River. But in reality, he was never content to be left out in the cold. He would deal with telegrams and letters from Beijing and other sources every day, and receive some visiting dignitaries. When he received the appointment as Viceroy of Huguang, he thought the power was too small and declined on the grounds that he had not yet recovered from his foot ailment. On October 20, 1911, the Qing court sent Xu Shichang to Zhangde to ask Yuan to step forward. Yuan set forth six prerequisites, including convening a congress, organizing a cabinet of responsibility, condoning the participants of the Wuchang Uprising, lifting the ban on political parties, granting full military power, and supplying sufficient military funds. In the meantime, he secretly instructed the Beiyang officers at the Wuhan front to linger, wait and see. On the 27th, Zaifeng was forced to yield again, appointing Yuan Shikai as Imperial Commissioner to control the naval and land armies in Hubei and the naval divisions of the Yangtze River. Then, the Cabinet of Prince Qing was dissolved and Yuan Shikai was appointed prime minister in his place, establishing the Yuan Cabinet.

Having seized the military and political power of the Qing government, Yuan Shikai set off for Hubei on October 30 to oversee Xiaogan, and the Beiyang Army soon took over Hankou. On the one hand, Yuan showed his competence to the Qing court, while on the other hand, he induced and coerced the revolutionaries to accept a “peaceful settlement.” Li Yuanhong and the leaders of the Hubei military government thought they could use the peace talks to win Yuan over.

On December 7, 1911, the Qing court appointed Yuan Shikai as minister plenipotentiary and ordered him to appoint a representative to go to the south to negotiate. On the next day, Yuan appointed Tang Shaoyi as the plenipotentiary, who quickly traveled south to Wuhan to negotiate peace. On the 9th, the military government of the 11 southern provinces publicly elected Wu Tingfang as the representative, and the north–south peace talks officially began.

The final agreement reached was to institute a republican system in China. During the peace talks, the revolutionaries also came under great pressure from the constitutionalists, who feared that the revolution would endanger their own vested interests and hoped that Yuan Shikai, who controlled the Beiyang Army and was favored by imperialism, would stabilize the situation. Zhang Jian and others actively carried out behind-the-scenes activities to create an atmosphere of compromise and force the revolutionaries to concede power to Yuan. When Yuan got the assurance from the south, he stopped discussing with the south whether the monarchy or republic would be adopted, but accepted the proposal of the south to abdicate the Qing emperor and elect Yuan as president.

After Yuan Shikai received an effective assurance by the south that he would be elected president, he stepped up his efforts to “force the abdication” of the Qing emperor. On January 16, 1912, he and the cabinet ministers jointly presented a secret memorial, exaggerating that the Qing court was at the end of its tether and requesting Empress Dowager Longyu to convene a meeting of the imperial family to discuss a plan and the emperor to abdicate as soon as possible. On January 26, Yuan instructed Duan Qirui and more than 40 senior Beiyang officers to issue a pro-republican public telegram to increase pressure on the Qing court. Then, Liangbi was assassinated with a bomb by revolutionary Peng Jiazhen, which greatly terrified the royal family and caused them to flee from a seemingly imminent disaster. Meanwhile, Yuan promised to give special “preferential treatment” to the Qing emperor and the imperial family. On February 6, the Provisional Senate of Nanjing adopted the articles of favorable treatment of the Qing emperor after his abdication, which provided that the title of the Qing emperor remained unchanged and the Republic of China treated him as a foreign monarch; the annual royal expenses of 4 million yuan would be granted by the Republic of China; the Qing emperor lived temporarily in the palace, and later moved to the Summer Palace, with the guards retained as usual; and his private properties were placed under special protection by the Republic of China. On February 12, the Qing emperor issued an edict announcing his abdication. Thus, the Qing Dynasty, which had ruled in China for more than 260 years, came to an end.

9.4 New Culture Movement and the Enlightenment of Minds

In the early days of the rule of the Beiyang warlords, a cultural enlightenment movement—the New Culture Movement—broke out, which advocated science, opposed feudal superstition, and fiercely attacked the feudal ideology that had lasted for thousands of years.

In September 1915, Chen Duxiu founded the *Youth Magazine* in Shanghai (renamed *New Youth* from Volume 2 onwards, with the editorial office moved to Beijing at the end of 1916), inaugurating the New Culture Movement. In his article “A Message to the Youth,” Chen strongly advocated “human rights” and “science” and attacked the nationalism advocated by “*guocui pai*” (national essence school). Li Dazhao and Lu Xun, and famous scholars Hu Shih and Qian Xuantong, who actively advocated new culture, participated in the editing of, and contribution to, the *New Youth* in succession. This publication connected a group of progressive intellectuals and became the center of the gradually unfolding New Culture Movement (Fig. 9.3).

The New Culture Movement first raised the slogan “Down with Confucianism.” In February 1916, the *Kongzi Pingyi* (*Appraisal of Confucius*), authored by Yi Baisha, immediately raised the movement from appraising Confucianism to overthrowing it. Chen Duxiu adopted the attitude of rejecting Confucianism in entirety. Li Dazhao believed that Confucius was “the talisman of autocracy over the past dynasties.” Lu Xun’s attack on feudal rituals was the fiercest. He wrote in his first vernacular story, *Kuangren Riji* (*Diary of a Madman*), “I tried to look this up, but my history has no chronology, and scrawled all over each page are the words ‘Virtue and Morality.’ Since I could not sleep anyway, I read intently half the night, until I began to see words between the lines, the whole book being filled with the two words ‘Eat people.’”

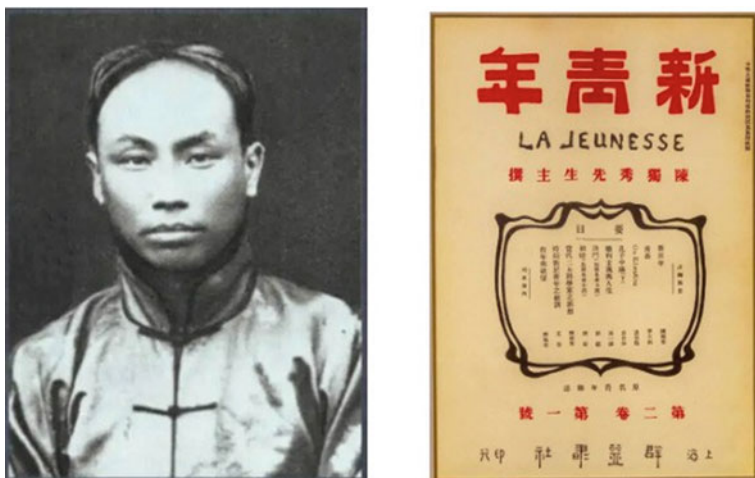


Fig. 9.3 Chen Duxiu and the *New Youth* (*La Jeunesse*)

He regarded the core Confucian concepts of virtue and morality as “cannibalism” and proposed the social ideal of “no cannibals should be allowed to live in the future world.” Lu Xun’s “call to arms” was soon echoed by many others—Wu Yu wrote an article titled “Ritualism and Cannibalism” to provide historical proof of the cannibalistic nature of ritualism.

The proponents of the New Culture Movement advocated a reform in literature. As early as 1915, Li Dazhao already proposed that the task of the literati was to “awaken the world with the wisdom of foresight”, but it did not attract due attention in the literary circles at that time. It was only after the influence of the ideological revolution gradually expanded that the New Literature Movement emerged. Bourgeois intellectuals who participated in the New Culture Movement at that time were represented by Hu Shih, who advocated vernacular literature because the vernacular form was suitable for the content of new ideas and new literature. He was trying to make vernacular Chinese writings proper literature. In his “A Preliminary Discussion of Literature Reform,” he writes, “From the perspective of historical evolution in the present day, it can be asserted that vernacular literature is the proper Chinese literature and a necessary instrument for future literature.” Hu put forward the famous eight principles, namely, “Write with substance; do not imitate the ancients; respect grammar; reject melancholy; eliminate old clichés; do not use allusions; do not use couplets or parallelism; do not avoid popular expressions or popular forms of characters.” Chen Duxiu went on to publish an essay titled “On Literary Revolution,” which turned Hu Shih’s mildly doctrinaire claims into a revolutionary diatribe. Chen Duxiu clearly states in the essay that the Chinese must completely discard feudal literature and the old eight-legged style, overthrowing the aristocratic literature with its flattery and ornateness and building a plain and lyrical national literature, overturning the trite classical literature marked by elaboration and developing a fresh realistic literature distinguished by sincerity, rejecting the obscure and abstruse literature focusing on mountains and forests and building a clear and popular literature reflecting the society.

The New Culture Movement also raised the two banners of “science” and “democracy.” Democracy, personified as Mr. De, referred to bourgeois democracy. It opposed the autocracy of monarchs and the despotism of warlords to realize true democratic politics. Science, personified as Mr. Sai, referred to natural science and scientific attitude and scientific method, opposing superstition, blind obedience and arbitrariness, and establishing an active and progressive scientific spirit. Chen Duxiu says in “To the Youth,” “The rise of science has made its contribution as great as the theory of human rights—they are like the two wheels of the carriage ... For the Chinese to get out of the age of ignorance ... we should give equal importance to science and human rights.”

The New Culture Movement was supported by Cai Yuanpei, the president of Peking University. Cai Yuanpei (1868–1940), courtesy name Heqing, literary name Jiemin, was a native of Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province. After the Revolution of 1911, he served as the Minister of Education of the Provisional Government of Nanjing and became the president of Peking University at the end of 1916. When he was in charge of Peking University, he advocated the principle of “freedom of thought”

and “inclusiveness,” allowing various schools of thought to develop freely. He hired Chen Duxiu, an advocate of the new culture, as Dean of School of Letters and Li Dazhao as Director of the Library. Hu Shih, Liu Bannong, Qian Xuantong, Zhou Zuoren, Lu Xun, and a group of natural scientists who had returned from their study abroad all came to teach at Peking University.

The New Culture Movement was a continuation of the Revolution of 1911 in the field of culture and thought, and a fierce struggle between the new bourgeois culture and the old culture of the feudal classes. It dealt an unprecedented heavy blow to feudalism politically and ideologically, broke the fetters of feudal dogma on people’s minds, and played a critical role in awakening the Chinese people, especially the intellectual youth. It was another wave of intellectual liberation under new historical conditions, which prompted people to pursue more urgently the truth of saving the country and the people, and created favorable conditions for the spread of Marxism in China.

The New Culture Movement before the May Fourth Movement was still bourgeois and old-democratic in nature, and had the limitations of its class and times. The advocates of the Movement ignored the people and did not bring it to the masses, so that it was confined to the circle of intellectuals, and the new culture and new thoughts did not spread to workers and peasants.

When World War I broke out in 1914, Japan declared war on Germany and appropriated the various rights and interests that Germany had acquired in Shandong on the pretext of war. In 1918, the war ended with the defeat of Germany. On January 18, 1919, the victorious countries held the Peace Conference in Paris. On January 21, the Peking government and the Guangzhou military government jointly formed a five-member delegation to participate in the Peace Conference as a victorious country.

At the Conference, the Chinese delegation demanded the abolition of the privileges of the powers in China, the revocation of the unequal *Twenty-one Demands* concluded between the Japanese imperialists and Yuan Shikai, and the return of the rights in Shandong that Japan had seized from Germany during the war. The Paris Peace Conference, manipulated by the imperialist powers, not only rejected China’s demands, but also explicitly transferred all the German privileges in Shandong to Japan in the peace treaty with Germany. The failure of China’s diplomacy at the Conference became the trigger for the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement.

On May 4, more than 3000 student representatives from three institutions of higher education in Beijing broke through the obstructions of the military and police and gathered at Tiananmen Square. They put up slogans such as “return Qingdao to China” “take back the sovereignty over Shandong” “do not sign the *Versailles Treaty*” “do away with the *Twenty-one Demands*” “boycott Japanese goods” and “better to be destroyed than to give up our principles”. They also demanded the punishment of Cao Rulin, the chief of communications; Lu Zongyu, the minister of currency; and Zhang Zongxiang, the ambassador to Japan. The student procession set fire to Cao’s residence, Zhaojialou, and beat up Zhang Zongxiang. Subsequently, the military and police suppressed the incident and arrested 32 student representatives.

The student demonstration received wide attention and people from all walks of life gave their concern and support by protesting against the arrest of students. The warlord government in Beijing issued a proclamation strictly prohibiting protests, and Xu Shichang, President of the Republic of China, ordered a crackdown. However, student groups and social groups rallied in support. On May 11, a student union was established in Shanghai, and on the 14th, the Tianjin student union was founded. Students and workers in Guangzhou, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Wuhan, and Jinan also gave their support. On May 19, students in Beijing declared a strike at the same time, and issued a declaration of strike to the parliaments, education associations, trade unions, chambers of commerce, farmers' associations, schools and newspapers in all provinces. Students in Tianjin, Shanghai, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Chongqing, Nanchang, Wuhan, Changsha, Xiamen, Jinan, Kaifeng, and Taiyuan declared strikes one after another after the launch of the strike by students in schools in Beijing, in support of their struggle.

On June 5, Shanghai workers began a mass strike in response to the student movement. Over 20,000 workers went on a strike. On the 6th, 7th, and 9th, the workers of Shanghai's tramways, dockyard workers, cleaning workers and ship sailors also went on strike, totaling about 60,000–70,000 people. The Shanghai workers' strikes spread to other places, and the workers of Changxindian of the Beijing-Hankou railway and the Beijing-Fengtian railway and those in Jiujiang all held strikes and demonstrations. On the 6th, the *Shanghai Gejie Lianhehui* (Shanghai Federation of All Sectors) was formed to oppose the opening of classes and markets, and to unite with other regions to notify the demands of the Shanghai strike. Through the three-strike movement in Shanghai, more than 150 cities in 22 provinces across the country responded to varying extent.

On June 11, Chen Duxiu, Gao Yihan, and others went to the downtown area outside Qianmen in Beijing to distribute the *Proclamation of Beijing Citizens*, stating that if the government did not accept the demands of the citizens, "we, students, businessmen, laborers, and soldiers have no choice but to take direct action for fundamental changes." Consequently, Chen was arrested. Student groups and prominent members of society from all over the country published open telegrams to protest against this atrocity of the government. Faced with strong pressure, Cao Rulin, Lu Zongyu, and Zhang Zongxiang were removed from office successively and President Xu Shichang offered to resign. After June 12, workers resumed work one after another and students stopped their strikes. On June 28, Chinese representatives did not sign the *Versailles Treaty*.

The May Fourth Movement marked the end of the old democratic revolution and the beginning of the new democratic revolution in China. The Chinese revolution entered a new historical period from then on. The New Culture Movement following the May Fourth Movement became an ideological movement to promote Marxism and various socialist schools, transforming the old democratic cultural movement into a new one guided by Marxism.

9.5 Attempt and Failure of Republicanism

Although the Revolution of 1911 did not change the nature of China as a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society, it overthrew the Qing Dynasty and established the Republic of China, which brought about fundamental institutional changes in China's social and political elements. The course of China's modernization thus entered a new period. After the founding of the Republic of China, the democratic republican system of the Republic of China existed in name only because of Yuan Shikai's authoritarian rule in politics and then self-enthronement. After Yuan's death, China was again plunged into chaotic warlordism. Government authority and control over society were reduced to a minimum, and the institutions of political democracy were merely instruments of power struggle. However, this period also saw a new exploration and choice of the path of China's social development. Economically, the "golden age" of the bourgeoisie emerged, and ideologically and culturally, an era of intellectual enlightenment emerged, marked by the May Fourth New Literature Movement and the introduction of Marxism into China.

In early 1913, the Kuomintang (KMT), which was formed by the reorganization of the Tongmenghui, won the official parliamentary elections. The acting chairman of the KMT, Song Jiaoren, prepared to organize a cabinet. Yuan Shikai, in order to prevent the KMT from taking power, not only attacked Song maliciously in the press, but also plotted to remove this political opponent by assassination. At 10:00 p.m. on March 20, 1913, Song was shot by an assassin sent by Yuan at the Shanghai station. In the early hours of the 22nd, he died at the Shanghai-Nanjing Railway Hospital at the young age of 31. Before he died, he still sincerely hoped that Yuan Shikai would "be committed and fair and do his best to protect the people's rights, so that the National Assembly would be able to determine an unshakeable constitution. Then despite my death, I would be as good as alive." The revolutionaries quickly assisted the concession authorities in capturing the assassins. But Yuan, in an attempt to cover up the truth of the crime, also postured that the murderers would be severely punished. The final results of the investigation showed that Yuan Shikai was the mastermind behind the scenes; Zhao Bingjun, premier of the State Council, was the direct coordinator; Hong Shuzu, secretary of the State Council was responsible for the liaison; Ying Kuicheng was the man who directed the assassination; and Wu Shiying was the assassin. When the truth was revealed, public opinion was in an uproar. At this time, Sun Yat-sen returned to Shanghai from Japan. He recognized the reactionary nature of Yuan Shikai and realized that "Yuan must be removed." Accordingly, he strongly advocated a punitive expedition against him, and thus the Second Revolution, a campaign to defend the achievements of the Revolution of 1911. Sun and other revolutionaries inherited the glorious tradition of armed struggle and fought bravely against those with superior power. Its failure also fully exposed the weakness of the revolutionary movement led by the bourgeoisie.

After crushing the Second Revolution, Yuan Shikai further destroyed the bourgeois democratic political system, undermined the parliament and the responsible cabinet, and enforced dictatorial rule. In July 1913, Yuan Shikai appointed Xiong

Xiling, a member of the Progressive Party, as the premier of the cabinet. Liang Qichao and Zhang Jian, also members of the Progressive Party, were inducted into the cabinet, which was claimed to be the “cabinet with first-rate talents,” as well. However, the main ministries such as the Ministries of the Army and Foreign Affairs were still in the hands of Yuan Shikai’s cronies. After the establishment of Xiong’s cabinet, Yuan stepped up his planning for the election of the president. Under Yuan Shikai’s duress, the National Assembly violated the legal procedures and concocted a law on presidential election before the promulgation of the constitution. On October 6, the election was held. Yuan sent thousands of plainclothes policemen, ruffians, and hooligans under the banner of “Citizens’ Corps” to surround the election venue, claiming that “unless the president desired by the citizens is elected today, the electors will not be allowed to take a step out of the venue.” The deputies had to bend their heads to do his bidding and endure hunger all day long to conduct the election. From 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., they voted three times in a row before Yuan Shikai was elected president. The following day, Li Yuanhong was elected vice president. On October 10, Yuan Shikai deliberately chose to hold his inauguration ceremony in the Hall of Supreme Harmony, acting as if he was the emperor.

After Yuan Shikai became the official President, he was determined to kick aside the political parties and the National Assembly in order to further clear the obstacles for the restoration of the imperial system. On November 4, he ordered the disbanding of the KMT on the pretext that the KMT members in the assembly had committed the crimes of “disrupting the country and harming the people” and “destroying the unification” during the Second Revolution, and disqualified all KMT members. He also sent soldiers and police to seize the certificates and badges of 438 KMT members, causing the National Assembly to exist in name only because the quorum could not be met. In December, Yuan designated some warlords, bureaucrats, dregs of feudalism, and members of the Progressive Party to form a Political Congress to usurp the powers of the National Assembly, and on January 10, 1914, by the resolution of the Political Congress, the National Assembly was dissolved by Yuan’s decree, and the autonomy councils and provincial assemblies in each province were also abolished by decree. In this way, the National Assembly, which symbolized the bourgeois democracy, and the relevant institutions everywhere were trampled on by Yuan.

After the dissolution of the National Assembly, Yuan Shikai instructed the Political Congress to convene a constitution-making conference in March 1914. At the conference, the *Constitution of the Republic of China* was concocted in a haste on May 1 and the *Provisional Constitution* was repealed. The constitution expanded the power of the president to a level similar to that of the autocratic emperor, changed the responsible cabinet system to a presidential system, abolished the State Council, and established the *Zhengshitang* (Hall of Government Affairs) as an office within the presidential office, with the Secretary of State as the head. According to this constitution, the Senate was established to act as a legislative body, whose members were all appointed by Yuan Shikai, and most of them were survivors of the Qing Dynasty and Yuan Shikai’s cronies, with Li Yuanhong as the chairman. The Senate amended the presidential election law for Yuan Shikai, stipulating that the president’s term of office was 10 years, with no limit on re-election after the term expired, and that the

person to be elected was recommended by the incumbent president. In this way, Yuan could not only serve as president for life, but also be succeeded by his descendants as president. It can be seen that Yuan's dissolution of the National Assembly, abrogation of the Provisional Constitution, and change of the presidency to a life-long system had completely cancelled the only remaining form of bourgeois democracy in the Revolution of 1911, and the bourgeois republic was only left with the empty name "Republic of China." The people of the time lamented sadly, "With so much money spent and so much blood shed, what we have got is only a false republic".

9.6 Introduction of Marxism and the Founding of the Communist Party of China

The May Fourth Movement was the new beginning of the Chinese workers' movement. After the Movement, workers' strikes and political struggles continued. Meanwhile, the majority of intellectuals gradually changed their views on the working people amidst the voices of "laborers are sacred" and "join hands with laborers." Many advanced elements took the initiative to approach the workers, went to the mines and factories to learn about the workers' life and labor conditions, and introduced socialism to the workers. After a year of efforts, Marxism-Leninism spread more widely and began to be integrated with the workers' movement.

In early 1920, communist intellectuals in Beijing and Shanghai, such as Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhang, began to plan the establishment of a communist organization. In April of the same year, the Far East Bureau of the Comintern sent Grigori Voitinsky to China to learn about the country's political situation. Voitinsky met with Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu and others in Beijing and Shanghai to discuss the establishment of a communist party in China. After that, communist organizations sprang up in various places.

The first Chinese communist organization was founded in Shanghai. Officially established in August 1920, it was launched by Chen Duxiu, Li Da, Chen Wangdao, Li Hanjun, and Yu Xiusong, with Chen Duxiu as the secretary. In September 1920, the communist organization in Shanghai made *New Youth* its organ, and in November, it started the monthly *Communist Party*. The communist organization in Beijing was founded in October 1920, and its members included Li Dazhao, Zhang Shenfu, Zhang Guotao, Deng Zhongxia, Luo Zhanglong, Liu Renjing, Gao Junyu, He Mengxiong, and Zhang Tailei. In the autumn of 1920, Dong Biwu, Chen Tanqiu, and Bao Huisheng held a meeting in Wuchang and established the communist organization of Wuhan. Around December 1920, Wang Jinmei and a part of the backbone of the Marxism research association in Shandong secretly established the communist organization in Shandong, with Wang Jinmei, Deng Enming, and Wang Xiangqian as the first members. The communist organization of Guangdong was established in January 1921, with the help of Chen Duxiu. The earliest members were Tan Pingshan, Chen

Gongbo, Tan Zhitang, and others. Mao Zedong and He Shuheng established the communist organization of Hunan in Changsha.

The early communist organizations mentioned above, though with different names, were all by nature communist groups. Their establishment marked a significant step forward in the integration of Marxism-Leninism with the Chinese workers' movement. All the communist groups across China were active in the preparatory work for the establishment of a unified national communist party.

These communist groups around the country intensified their publicity and organizational work targeting the working class in order to formally establish the Communist Party of China. One of the important ways in which they engaged in the workers' movement was through the publication of specialized periodicals that made Marxism available to workers in an comprehensible way. In August 1920, the Shanghai communist group released a workers' publication, *Labor World*, which was a good read for workers at the time to learn the basics of socialism. In November 1920, the Beijing communist group founded the *Voice of Labor*. Its central focus was to reflect the miserable life of workers at the time and to report on their strike struggles. It particularly emphasized the need to "promote the unity of fellow workers in the country" and to become an "instrument of class warfare" for them. The Guangzhou communist group started *The Laborer* and *Labor and Women*.

On July 23, 1921, the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China was convened in Shanghai (moved to the Nanhu Lake in Jiaxing, Zhejiang on the last day). There were 12 delegates attending the congress: Mao Zedong, He Shuheng, Dong Biwu, Chen Tanqiu, Wang Jinmei, Deng Enming, Li Da, Li Hanjun, Zhang Guotao, Liu Renjing, Chen Gongfu, and Zhou Fohai. Also attending the congress was Bao Huiseng, the delegate appointed by Chen Duxiu. They represented more than 50 Party members nationwide. Henk Sneevliet, a representative of the Communist International, and Vladimir Abramovich Neiman- Nikolsky, a representative of the Red International of Labor Unions, were also present. The congress determined that the goal of the party was to overthrow the bourgeoisie with the revolutionary army of the proletariat, establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, and abolish private ownership until class differences were eliminated. The congress also adopted a resolution on current practical work. It determined that the central task of the Party after its establishment was to organize the working class, establish labors unions, open workers' schools, raise the consciousness of workers, and carry out the workers' movement. The congress elected Chen Duxiu, Zhang Guotao, and Li Da to form the Central Bureau, with Chen as the secretary, Zhang responsible for organizational work, and Li responsible for publicity work. It closed on July 31. This congress announced the birth of the Communist Party of China. From then on, a completely new type of unified working-class party with communism as its aim and Marxism-Leninism as its guide of action emerged in China.

The founding of the Communist Party of China was of epoch-making significance in Chinese history. "After it was founded, the Communist Party of China brought a new look to the Chinese revolution." For more than seventy years after the Opium War, the Chinese people fought valiantly and tenaciously against imperialism and feudalism. However, without the leadership of an advanced class and its political

party, these struggles had failed. After the founding of the CPC, “proletarian leadership has fundamentally changed the whole face of the revolution, has brought about a new alignment of classes, given rise to a tremendous upsurge in the peasant revolution, imparted thoroughness to the revolution against imperialism and feudalism, created the possibility of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, and so on. None of these was possible in the period when the revolution was under bourgeois leadership.” Since the birth of the Communist Party of China, it has been engaged in a fiery revolutionary struggle for the realization of its program.

The Second Congress of the Communist Party of China was held in Shanghai from July 16 to 23, 1922. The 12 delegates were Chen Duxiu, Zhang Guotao, Li Da, Gao Junyu, Wang Jinmei, Deng Enming, Cai Hesen, and others, representing the 195 Party members. Based on Lenin’s theory of national and colonial revolution, the congress discussed the basic problems of the Chinese revolution, passed resolutions on such items as the general world situation and the CPC; international imperialism, China and the CPC; the united front of democracy; the joining of the Communist International; parliamentary action; labor union movement; youth movement; women’s movement; and the constitution of the CPC. It adopted a Party constitution; and adopted and published the famous *Manifesto of the Second National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, which officially announced the Party’s democratic revolutionary programs. The manifesto set forth the highest and lowest programs of the Party, stating that the Communist Party of China was the party of the Chinese proletariat. Its aim was to organize the proletariat, use the means of class struggle, establish the politics of the dictatorship of the laborers and peasants, eradicate the system of private property, and gradually reach a communist society. This was the highest program of the Party, the ultimate goal for which the Party fought. The manifesto also states that under the current historical conditions, the Party’s goals were to eliminate civil strife, defeat warlords, and build domestic peace; to overthrow international imperialist oppression and achieve complete independence for the Chinese nation; and to unify China as a true democratic republic. This was the Party’s anti-imperialist and anti-feudal democratic revolutionary program, i.e. the lowest program. The congress decided to publish the weekly newspaper *Guide*, the organ of the CPC Central Committee. It re-elected the leading organ of the Central Committee. The five elected members of the Central Committee were Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, Zhang Guotao, Cai Hesen, and Gao Junyu, and the two alternate members were Deng Zhongxia and Xiang Jingyu. Chen was the chairman of the committee, while Cai Hesen and Zhang Guotao were in charge of publicity and organization, respectively.

The Second National Congress of the CPC put forward for the first time a thoroughly anti-imperialist and anti-feudal program of democratic revolution, showing the Chinese people the only correct path to liberation. This shows that only the Communist Party of China, the party of the Chinese proletariat armed with Marxism-Leninism, could take up the responsibility of leading the Chinese revolution.

Chapter 10

A New Chapter of Chinese Civilization



Huaping Huang

The founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in October 1949 opened a new chapter in the history of Chinese civilization, which had suffered a hundred years of tribulation and catastrophe. In 1956, as the transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, and capitalist industry and commerce succeeded, the socialist system was established in China, and the civilization of China's political system was reshaped. The Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee held by the CPC in 1978 made the great decision of reform and opening up and opened up the path of socialist development with Chinese characteristics. Over the past seven decades, the socialist economy and science and technology have developed rapidly and made brilliant achievements that have attracted the attention of the world. Since the 18th CPC National Congress convened in 2012, Chinese civilization has entered a new era with the creation of Xi Jinping's Socialist Thought with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the success in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, the advancement of economic, political, cultural, ethical, social, and eco-environmental progress, and the construction of a new type of international relations.

10.1 The Establishment of a New-Type State System

The question of what kind of state system to establish was a major historical issue facing the Chinese people since modern times. Since the founding of the PRC in October 1949, the CPC has adapted the basic tenets of Marxism to China's specific realities to establish a new-type state system in the ancient oriental country that guarantees that hundreds of millions of Chinese people are the masters of their own country (Fig. 10.1).

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Fig. 10.1 Mao Zedong declares the founding of the People's Republic of China

This new-type state system is different from both the liberal democracy of the West and the democratic system of the former Soviet Union and other socialist countries. It is characterized by a distinctive people's democratic dictatorship with Chinese characteristics. On the eve of the founding of the PRC, Mao Zedong pointed out in his article "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship" that "to sum up our experience and concentrate it into one point," we should establish "the people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the working class and based upon the alliance of workers and peasants," which exercises democracy over the masses of the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries. The *Common Program* adopted by the first plenary meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in September 1949 and the *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* adopted by the First Session of the National People's Congress (NPC) in October 1954 both stipulate that the PRC is country governed by a people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants.

This new state system, with distinctive Chinese characteristics in terms of political system, party politics, ethnic policy, and economy, is a new form of political system that is suitable for China's national conditions.

The form of government is a democratic and centralized system of people's congresses. Mao Zedong pointed out that the parliamentary system, which Yuan Shikai and Cao Kun had adopted, was already infamous. He considered that there was no need for the bourgeois parliamentary system and the three separate branches

of government; instead, China should establish a democratic and centralized system of people's congresses at all levels. The *Common Program* stipulates that "the state power of the People's Republic of China belongs to the people. The people's congresses and the people's governments of all levels are the organs for the exercise of state power by the people ... The organs of state power at all levels shall practice democratic centralism." The 1954 *Constitution* further provides that "all power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people. The Organs through which the people exercise power are the National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at various levels." "The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China is the highest organ of state power." "The State Council of the People's Republic of China, that is, the Central People's Government, is the executive organ of the highest organ of state power; it is the highest organ of state administration." "The National People's Congress, the local people's congresses and other organs of state practice democratic centralism."

In party politics, the basic political system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China is established. The PRC discarded the two-party system, multi-party system that was quite prevalent in Western capitalism and the one-party system of the former Soviet Union. Instead, it established a new type of political party system under the leadership of the CPC based on the good relations of cooperation and consultation between the CPC and the democratic parties and independents during the New Democratic Revolution. In September 1949, the first plenary meeting of the CPPCC was held, marking the establishment of the multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. In 1954, the *Charter of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference* was promulgated to further consolidate this democratic consultation system.

In terms of ethnic policy, a system of regional ethnic autonomy under the unified leadership of the central government has been implemented. In order to achieve equality among all ethnic groups, the CPC, taking into account the actual situation of China's ethnic groups, has implemented ethnic autonomy in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. The 1954 *Constitution* divided ethnic autonomous areas into autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures, and autonomous counties, with ethnic townships in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities below the county level. Up to now, there are 155 ethnic autonomous areas in China, including 5 autonomous regions, 30 autonomous prefectures, and 120 autonomous counties (banners).

Economically, a socialist economic system based on the public ownership of the means of production was established. The CPC creatively opened up a path of socialist transformation suitable for China's specific conditions. It actively and steadily carried out socialist transformation of agriculture and handicrafts through cooperative means, and transformed capitalist industry and commerce using the method of peaceful and "redemption" through the means of state capitalism. By 1956, with the completion of the socialist transformation, the socialist economic system was established.

The establishment of the PRC and the socialist system reshaped the civilization of China's political system, provided the institutional guarantee for the people's

mastership and the grand unity of the people of all ethnic groups throughout the country, and laid the fundamental political premise and institutional foundation for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

10.2 Pioneering the Path of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

In the early days of the establishment of socialist system, we were subject to the influence of the Soviet model and has deficiencies in the understanding of the objective laws of economy. Therefore, during the nearly 20-year (1956–1976) exploration phase of socialist economic construction, despite some achievements, China's socialist economic and social undertakings were still very backward, the gap did not narrow compared with the major capitalist countries, and the superiority of the socialist system was not demonstrated. What socialism is and how to build it became urgent and fundamental questions of socialism and major subjects for the Chinese Communist Party to address (Fig. 10.2).

Deng Xiaoping, responding to the tides of the times, insisted on adapting the basic tenets of Marxism to China's specific realities. He built on past successes to further advance the country's cause, successfully convening the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee, which was a great historical turnaround. It made the historic decision of shifting the work focus of the Party onto economic development and launching the reform and opening up drive; it made it clear that China would follow its own path and build socialism with Chinese characteristics. They provided sensible answers to a series of basic questions on building socialism with Chinese characteristics, and successfully created the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. With the progress of reform and opening up and the practice

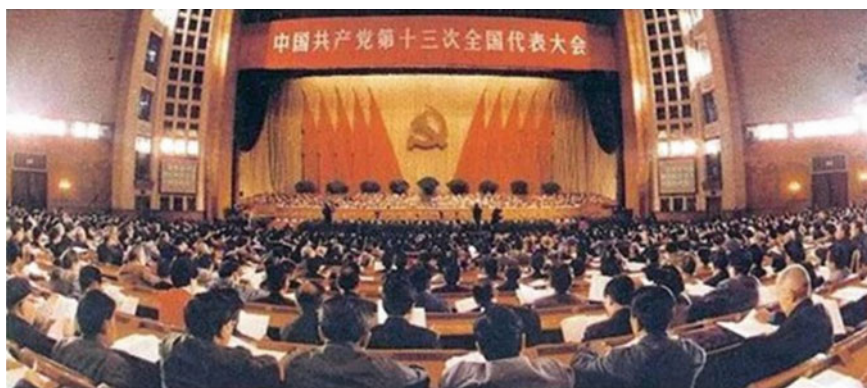


Fig. 10.2 The 13th National Congress of the CPC

of developing the cause of socialism, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao constantly enriched the substance of the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core has improved the scientific connotations of the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Its scientific connotations, broadly speaking, include four aspects. First, adhere to the leadership of the Party. Party politics is commonly practiced in modern societies, and state building is led by the ruling party. The path of socialism with Chinese characteristics was opened up by the people of China led by the Communist Party of China after a long period of exploration, and the leadership of the Party is the fundamental political guarantee for taking this path. Second, adhere to the One Central Task and Two Basic Points. That is, stick to the central task of economic development. All work of the Party and the state must be subordinated to and serve this central task, and cannot deviate from, let alone disrupt it; at the same time, adhere to the four basic principles and reform and opening up—the former is the foundation of the country, and the latter is the path to a stronger China, the source of vitality for the Party and the nation in development and progress, and a powerful driving force for the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Third, adhere to the Five-sphere Integrated Plan, i.e., the coordinated development of economy, politics, culture, society, and eco-environment. Fourth, pursue the goal of socialist construction, i.e., to build China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious.

The path of socialism with Chinese characteristics is one of modernization created by the Communist Party of China, which provides Chinese wisdom and Chinese solutions for the progress and development of human society and civilization.

10.3 Remarkable Achievements in Developing Socialist Economy and Science and Technology

Over the 70 years since the founding of the PRC in 1949, along with the continuous improvement of the socialist state system with Chinese characteristics and the socialist path, the socialist cause has developed rapidly. China has created a miracle of rapid economic development rarely seen in the world, made great achievements in science and technology, and triumphantly achieved its First Centenary Goal.

The economic strength has increased unprecedentedly, and the country has undergone drastic changes. The total economic volume of the PRC has surpassed that of Italy, France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Japan one after another, and has remained the second place in the world since 2010. The gross domestic product has jumped from 67.91 billion yuan in 1952 to 101.6 trillion yuan in 2020, and the per capita GDP has increased from 119 yuan to 72,000 yuan. China has achieved a historic leap from a low-income country to a middle- to high-income country. Since 2006, China has been the largest contributor to world economic growth for 15 consecutive years, and is now the world's top manufacturing country, the top trading

country in goods, the second largest consumer of goods, the second largest trading country in services, the largest destination of foreign investment, and the top country of overseas investment.

The rapid increase in economic strength has profoundly changed China. Its rural areas have taken on a new look. From the land reform to the socialist transformation of agriculture, from the implementation of the household responsibility system, the rise of township enterprises, and the abolition of agricultural taxes to the separation of the ownership rights, contractors' rights and land management rights of rural land, the victory in the battle against poverty, and the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, China's rural development has continuously taken new steps forward. By the end of 2020, 99.6% of townships and 99.5% of villages nationwide were connected to paved roads, the proportion of administrative villages covered by 4G exceeded 98%, and a large number of ecologically livable and beautiful villages were built. Urban construction is also changing day by day, with the number of cities having increased from 132 in 1949 to 672 in 2018, and the urbanization rate having increased from 10.6% to 59.6%. Since the reform and opening up, the pace of urban infrastructure construction has accelerated, the length of roads has increased by 15 times, the green area of built-up areas by 19 times, the capacity of sewage and that of domestic waste treatment by 263 times and 395 times respectively, and the penetration rate of gas and running water has reached 96.7% and 98.4% respectively, the carrying capacity of cities has been enhanced, and the living environment is more green and livable (Fig. 10.3).

The remarkable scientific and technological achievements of China have established its status as an innovative power. Since the founding of the PRC, China has developed science and technology independently, making significant achievements such as the Two Bombs and One Satellite, the first synthetic crystalline bovine insulin, artemisinin, and hybrid rice, which greatly enhanced the scientific and technological self-confidence of Chinese people as well as China's international status. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, China has been vigorously implementing the innovation-driven development strategy. Its investment in R&D has been the second highest in the world, with the total number of R&D personnel and the number of invention patent applications both ranking first in the world for many years. The



Fig. 10.3 Ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, and opening ceremony of the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics

Chang'e spacecraft have flown into space, the Jiaolong submersible has explored deep in the ocean, the FAST telescope has been observing the stars, and the Beidou navigation satellites have formed a network. China has made breakthroughs in manned spaceflight, lunar exploration, quantum science, deep-sea exploration, supercomputing, satellite navigation and many other fields, and taken a leading position in the world in independent innovation in such fields as domestic large aircraft, high-speed railroads, third-generation nuclear reactors and new energy vehicles.

The development of China's economy and science and technology has completely changed the backwardness, poverty, and weakness of China since modern times, and the Chinese nation has achieved a tremendous transformation—it has stood up, grown rich, and become strong.

10.4 Chinese Civilization in the New Era

Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at the core has accurately understood major development trends at home and abroad, and acted in line with practical needs and the people's wishes. With great political courage and a strong sense of responsibility, the Central Committee has set the direction, made overall plans, and braved challenges with a pioneering spirit. On this basis, it has made historic achievements in reform, opening up, and socialist modernization, and propelled historic changes in the undertakings of the Party and the country. Accordingly, the Chinese civilization moves into a new era.

First, Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era was formed. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the CPC has considered carefully the new conditions of the era and the new requirements of practice; provided sensible answers to the fundamental issues like the overarching objectives, tasks, plan, and strategy for upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era; like the direction, model, and driving force of development, and the strategic steps, external conditions, and political guarantees. Based on these major theoretical innovations, the Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era has been established. This Thought has adopted an entirely new perspective to further answers the questions of what socialism is and how to build it, what kind of party to build and how to build it, and what kind of development to pursue and how to pursue it. It also creatively answers the question of what kind of socialism with Chinese characteristics we should uphold and develop and how to uphold and develop it. The Thought has deepened the understanding of the laws that underlie governance by the CPC, the development of socialism, and the evolution of human society. It has become the action guide for the development of the Party and the state in the new era.

Secondly, a moderately prosperous society in all respects has been built and a new journey to build China into a modern socialist country in all respects has been started. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC Central Committee, with Xi Jinping as its core, has put the task of building a moderately prosperous society

in all respects in the first place of the Four-pronged Comprehensive Strategy, and made poverty eradication the bottom-line task and landmark indicator of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. After eight years of continuous struggle, the 98.99 million people in rural areas who were living below the current poverty threshold all shook off poverty; all the 128,000 impoverished villages and 832 designated poor counties got rid of poverty. China has eliminated poverty over entire regions and eradicated extreme poverty. With the per capita disposable income of residents rising from 49.7 yuan in 1949 to 32,000 yuan in 2020, China has witnessed the formation of the largest and most promising middle-income group in the world. The life of the Chinese people has made a historic leap from addressing subsistence to overall moderate prosperity and then to moderate prosperity in all respects. On the basis of achieving the First Centenary Goal, the CPC has taken advantage of the situation and started a new journey to build China into a modern socialist country in all respects. It plans to work hard for a further 15 years from 2020 to 2035 to see that socialist modernization is basically realized; and from 2035 to the middle of the twenty-first century, building on having basically achieved modernization, the Party will work hard for a further 15 years and see that China develops into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful, thus achieving the Second Centenary Goal.

Thirdly, it has facilitated coordinated economic, political, cultural, social, and eco-environmental advancement and created a new form of human civilization. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC has actively promoted coordinated economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological advancement, while adhering to the development path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Among them, economic advancement refers to a process of high-quality accumulation driven by scientific and technological progress; political advancement refers to the latest achievement of the socialist system; cultural advancement results from the pursuit of achieving all-round human development; social advancement embodies in the progress in social harmony, people's livelihood, and social governance; and eco-environmental advancement is a higher form of human civilization following agricultural and industrial civilization. To promote the coordinated development in the five aspects is to address the imbalance and inadequacy of development and the urgent problems of the people, to promote common prosperity in economic sense, to develop democracy throughout the whole process in politics, to pursue all-round human development, to maintain fairness and justice in society, and to realize the harmonious coexistence between man and nature, so as to bring about the prosperity of the people, the strength of the country and the beauty of China in concert. In this way, a new path of Chinese-style modernization and a new form of human civilization have been created.

Fourthly, a new type of international relations has been promoted and a major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics has been formed. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the Party Central Committee has actively promoted a new type of international relations with the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind as the core concept for diplomacy. President Xi Jinping has repeatedly stressed the significance of building a community with a shared future for mankind, pointing out that while countries vary in history, culture, system and level of

development, all peoples pursue the common human values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom, and that only by strengthening mutual understanding, support and assistance among countries can we seek cooperation in competition and mutual benefit in cooperation, and solve the real problems facing the world today and achieve the peaceful and sustainable development of human society.

Guided by the diplomatic concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind, the Chinese government has held high the banner of peace, development, and win-win cooperation and upheld the purpose of its foreign policy of maintaining world peace and promoting common development. It has unswervingly developed friendly cooperation with other countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, promoted the construction of a new type of international relations with mutual respect, fairness and justice, and win-win cooperation, and continuously advanced high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative. It has called on the people of all countries to work together to build an open, inclusive, clean, and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity. It has highlighted the general direction of China's diplomacy to the world, elevated China's diplomatic strategy to a historic new height, and fully demonstrated the Chinese characteristics, Chinese style, and Chinese manner of Chinese diplomacy.

In a word, Chinese civilization has risen from a low point to reach a peak of several thousand years within the 70 years since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. It has not only created a material civilization and a scientific and technological civilization that are rare in the world, but also created an institutional civilization and a path of modernization that are different from those of the West, and carried forward the values of human civilization of harmony and coexistence. Countless facts have eloquently proved that by adhering to the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the leadership of the Communist Party of China, Chinese civilization will proceed to a more glorious future and will make greater contributions to the peaceful and sustainable development of mankind.